MAPLE KIDS

Vishnu Sharma's

Complete Illustrated PANCHATANTRA

Based on the 5 Tantras

Separation of Friends
Gaining of Friends
Of Crows and Owls
Loss of Gains
Rash Deeds

Classic Illustrated Series

SHOUT
SHARE
IT

This is for My Darling

ASHA

Lots of Love

Sudha Naani

6 Jan 2020.

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1 THE LION AND THE BULL

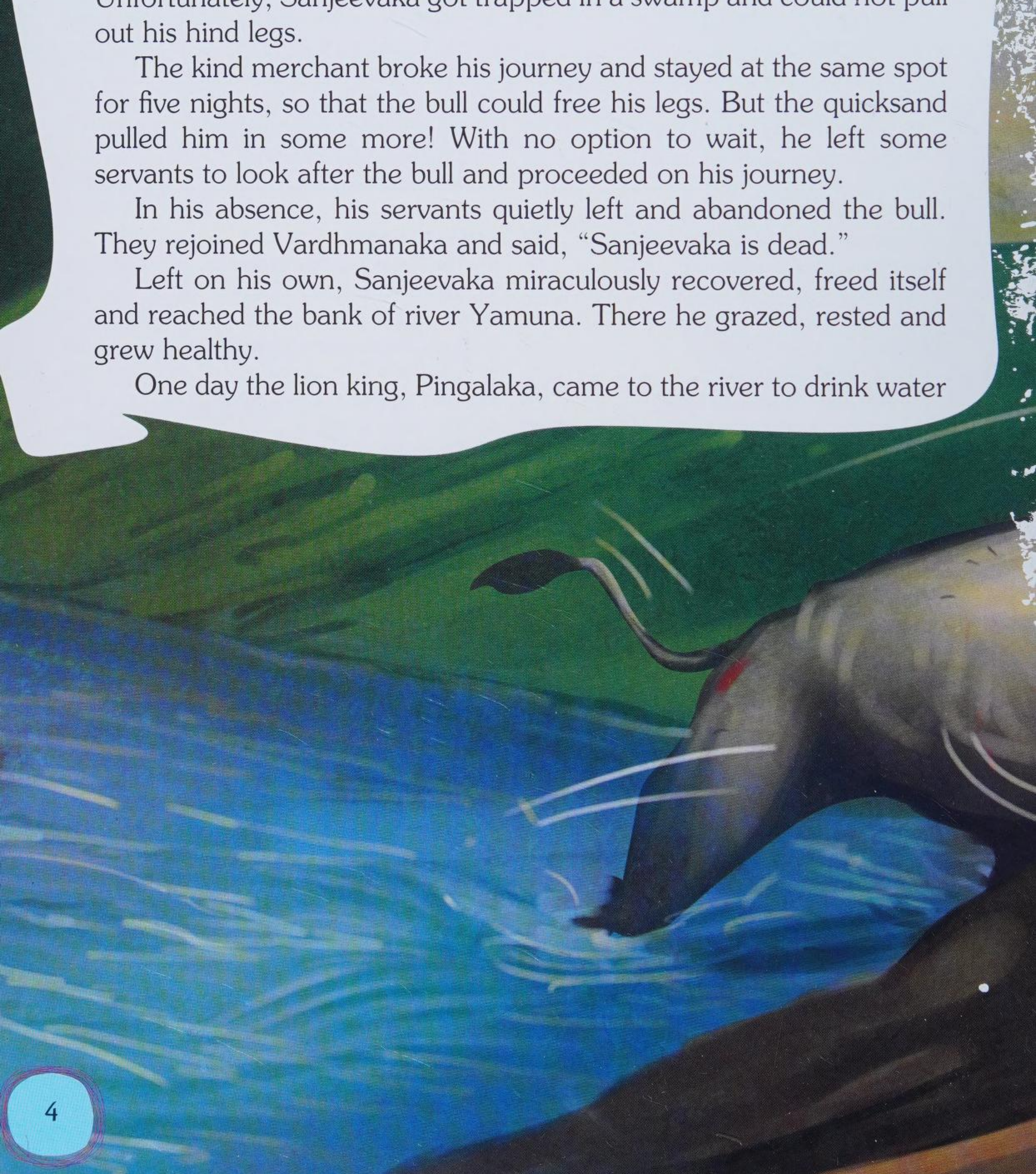
In the town of Vrindavan, lived a merchant named Vardhmanaka. He had two bulls, Sanjeevaka and Nandaka. One day, he went to the neighbouring city through a forest road. When afternoon fell, Vardhmanaka stopped near a river, and freed the bulls to drink water. Unfortunately, Sanjeevaka got trapped in a swamp and could not pull out his hind legs.

The kind merchant broke his journey and stayed at the same spot for five nights, so that the bull could free his legs. But the quicksand pulled him in some more! With no option to wait, he left some servants to look after the bull and proceeded on his journey.

In his absence, his servants quietly left and abandoned the bull. They rejoined Vardhmanaka and said, "Sanjeevaka is dead."

Left on his own, Sanjeevaka miraculously recovered, freed itself and reached the bank of river Yamuna. There he grazed, rested and grew healthy.

One day the lion king, Pingalaka, came to the river to drink water



and heard a strong bellowing sound. He thought that the sound belonged to a ferocious animal, stronger than him. His two assistants, jackals named Damanaka and Kartaka, stood near him. When Damanaka saw that his master was frightened, he said "Our Majesty! Please do not worry, I shall find out and bring the animal to you."

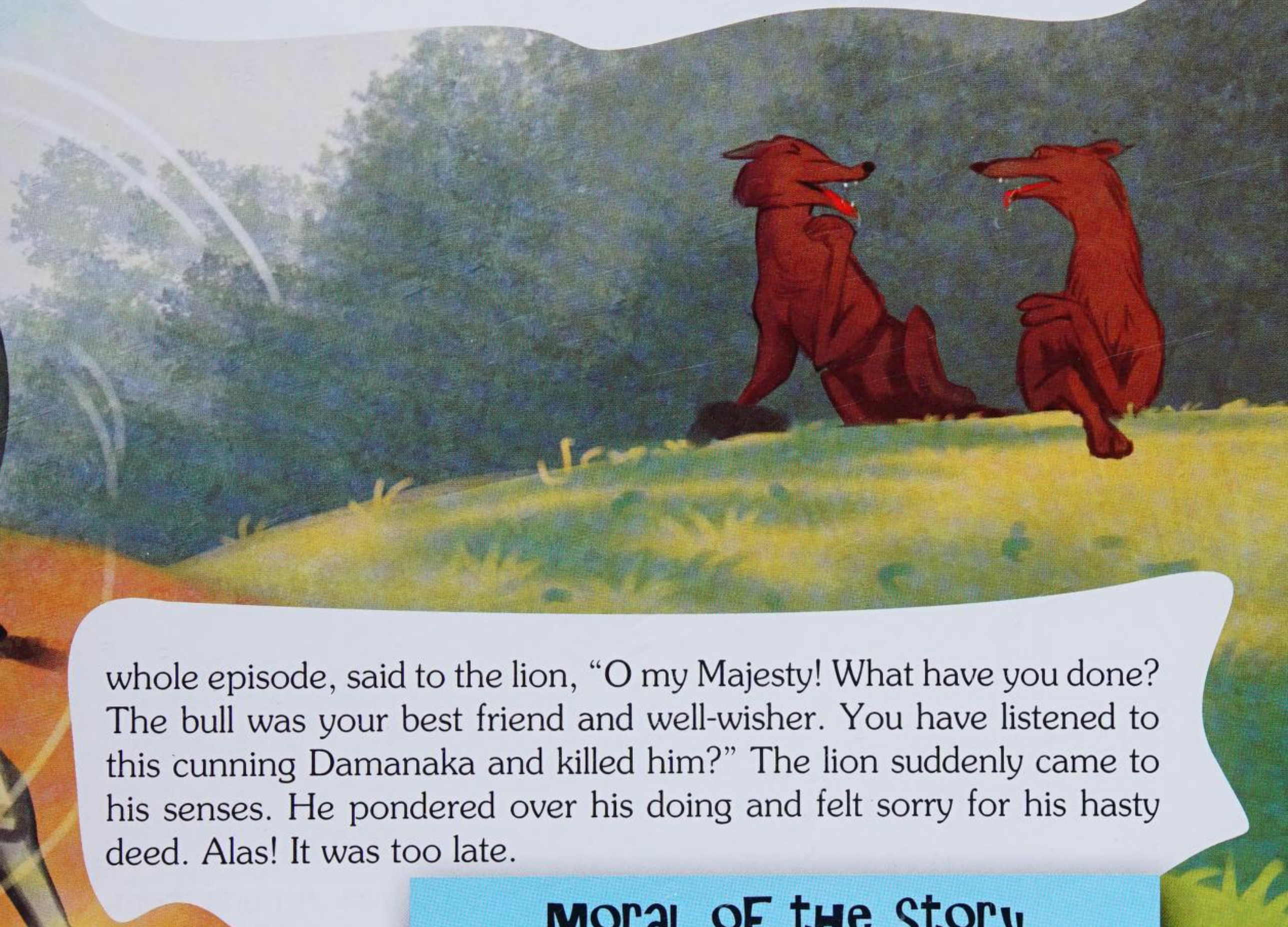
Damanaka found that it was the bull Sanjeevaka, who had frightened the king. He told the bull, "My friend! No outsider can stay in this forest without our king's permission. You have to convince him that you have come from outer world, to be his guest. The bull agreed and went to meet the lion. Damanaka told the lion, "Our Majesty, God has sent this bull to protect our kingdom." The lion was

very happy and welcomed the bull. They became good friends.

Because of this friendship, the lion stopped killing animals and neglected his kingdom. This worried Damanaka, as he had always got a share of the lion's meal. Now, he remained hungry for days together. So, he thought of a plan to get rid of the bull. He went

to the lion and said, "Majesty, Sanjeevaka has an evil eye on your kingdom and wants to kill you to become the king." Damanaka then went to Sanjeevaka and said, "Our master, the lion plans to kill you and get back to his old hunting routine. You should kill him before he kills you!"

On hearing this, the bull thought, "Hmmm... am I being cheated by the lion? He is the king after all and a flesh-eater! He can surely kill me." He ran towards the lion's cave in anger and started bellowing thunderously. Both the lion and the bull, blinded by rage, started a battle. Ultimately the lion killed the bull. Kartaka, when he heard the



whole episode, said to the lion, "O my Majesty! What have you done? The bull was your best friend and well-wisher. You have listened to this cunning Damanaka and killed him?" The lion suddenly came to his senses. He pondered over his doing and felt sorry for his hasty deed. Alas! It was too late.

Moral of the Story

A king should listen to his advisers, but decide on his own.

2

THE MONKEY AND THE WEDGE

Once, a group of monkeys lived on a big mango tree. Among them, one was very naughty and loved troubling people, and fiddling with things.

Once the village received very little rainfall, and there was a threat of famine and drought. A holy man suggested that a temple should be built to overcome the crisis. Soon all villagers started the work.

One afternoon the villagers left the construction site to have lunch. The naughty monkey, along with his friends, entered the construction site. He saw a partly sawed log with a wedge in it. It had been placed there by the villagers to easily resume their work after lunch. The monkey wondered, "What is this? Why is the wedge kept in the groove? What will happen if I take it out?"

The meddlesome monkey sat on the log and started pulling the wedge. Suddenly, the wedge came out, closing the groove in the log. The monkey had carelessly put his legs inside the rift while sitting on the log, and when it closed, his legs got trapped. He started crying and tried to open the log, but all his efforts to pull out his legs were in vain. In shock and pain, he finally died.

Moral of the Story

Do not poke your nose into others affairs.

3 THE JACKAL AND THE DRUM

Once, a jackal named Gomaya lived in the forest. One day he left the forest and reached an open field in search of food. The field was very calm and quiet. He was tired and soon fell asleep.

Suddenly, he heard a great booming sound in the vicinity. He was completely confused and frightened. The sound was strange and he had never heard it before.

Gomaya thought, "My God! What a terrible sound? Where could that be coming from?"

Out of fright, he started running but suddenly stopped. He thought, "May be, I'm frightened for no reason. Let me once again go back to that place and investigate the source of the sound."

Walking cautiously in the direction of the sound, he saw a battle drum lying under a creeper. He realised that the rubbing of the creepers against the drum was creating that noise. Sensing that it was harmless, the jackal came close to it.

With joy and relief he thought, "Aha, now I know where the sound came from. May be I can get some food inside the drum too."

Thinking this, he made a hole in the drum and jumped inside it. Alas! He found the drum empty!

He left the empty drum and continued his search for food, consoling himself with the thought, "At least I overcame my fear of the noise from the drum."

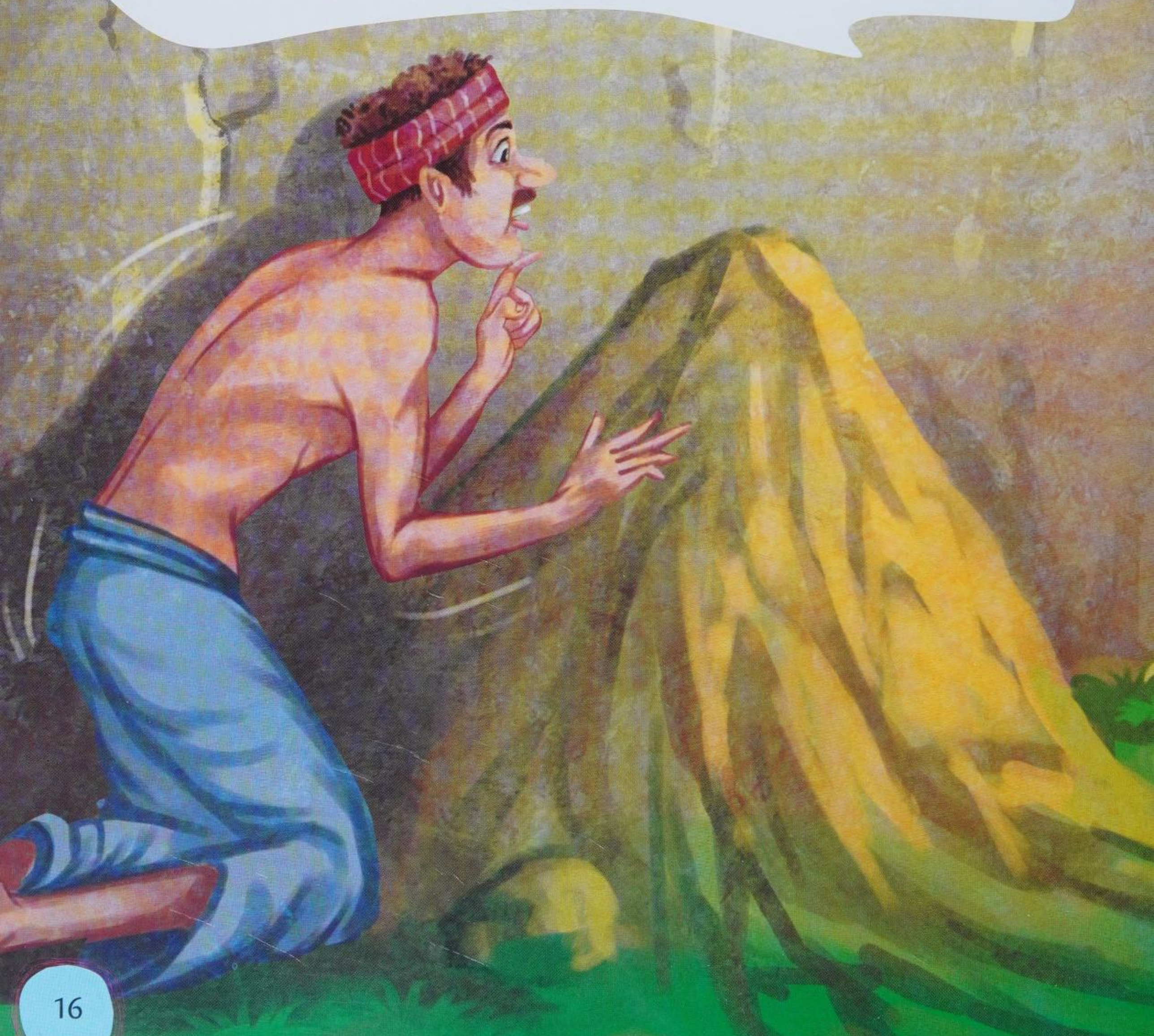
Moral of the Story

One should always be brave.

4 THE SAGE AND THE SWINDLER

Once upon a time, there lived a *brahmin* named Deva Sharma. He made a living by selling clothes gifted to him by people. Soon he became rich. Then he started worrying on how to safeguard his wealth. He did not trust anyone, so he always carried the money with him.

A thief named Ashadhabhooti noticed him carrying a bag with him at all times. He felt that the bag contained something valuable and planned to steal it. He thought, "If I can win this man's confidence and trick him, I can rob him of all his money."



One fine day, he went to Deva Sharma and said, "Oh holy saint, I am an orphan. Please accept me as your disciple. I promise, I will be faithful to you and serve you till my death." The saint was pleased with him and said, "You can be my disciple and can stay with me. You can accompany me and assist me, but never touch my bag."

The thief started pretending to be Deva Sharma's faithful disciple.

One day, the son of one of Deva Sharma's old pupil came with an invitation. So, Deva Sharma set off on a journey with that person and Ashadhabhooti through the forest. On the way, his dress got dirty as dry grass got stuck on it. Ashadhabhooti took advantage of the opportunity and said, "Pardon me sir; the straw on your dress is not yours. It belongs to the gentleman we camped with. Should we not return it to him?"

The saint was amazed at his sincerity, and said, "My son, what you say is right." He thought, "This fellow seems to be very honest. There is no fear of him stealing my money. I am relieved."

A little way ahead was a stream of water considered holy by people. Deva Sharma wanted to take a dip in its water. He told

Ashadhabhooti, "My son, I want to take a bath in the river. Take care of my robes and this bag." Then he went into the river to bathe.

While bathing, the saint's attention was diverted towards some goats fighting on the other river bank. He did not pay attention to Ashadhabhooti. Ashadhabhooti quietly took the saint's bundle of money and left that place.

When Deva Sharma returned after his bath he found both his bag and Ashadhabhooti missing. He called out to him, but there was no reply. Then he realized that he had been tricked. He began to cry, "Oh no, I have been robbed! Oh, all my money is gone. What a fool I am to believe a stranger."

Moral of the Story

A careless man will lose his riches.

5 THE CROW AND THE COBRA

Once upon a time, a crow couple lived happily on a big banyan tree. A cobra also lived inside a hole in the same tree. Every time the female crow laid eggs, the cobra ate her eggs from the nest. Unhappy with the situation, the crow couple shared their problem with their friend jackal.

The jackal thought for a while and said, "Hmmm, Don't worry my friends. I have a plan. Do as I say. Steal a costly jewelry from the king's palace and drop it into the cobra's hole. But be sure that the

king's people are watching you when you do it."

The female crow flew around the palace, looking for a piece of jewelry. She found the queen taking bath in the pond having kept her diamond necklace aside. She quickly picked up the necklace in her beak and flew away. The queen shouted to her attendants, "Help! Help! That crow has taken away my necklace. Quick! Follow her, and get back my necklace." The king's soldiers raced towards the flying crow with their weapons.

The crow flew straight towards the cobra's hole and dropped the necklace into it. It then sat on the top of the tree to watch the happenings below. The soldiers saw the crow dropping the necklace

into the hole. They banged their spikes inside the hole, hurting the cobra badly. The cobra came out of the hole to save its life. Seeing the cobra, the soldiers immediately killed it. They took the queen's necklace from the hole and went away. The wise crow couple lived happily forever.

Moral of the Story

When time and tide are against you, don't give up.

6 THE CRANE AND THE CRAB

An old crane lived on the edge of a lake.

Being old and not being able to catch fish, it thought of a plan to get easy meals. Sitting on the side of the water, he began to cry. Hearing the cry a crab asked, "Why are you crying?"

The crane said, "Yesterday, I heard two astrologers discussing that there would be no rain for the next twelve years. The fish and other creatures living here will die soon."

The crab, believing him, asked, "How can we all save ourselves?"

The crane replied, "I have got an idea. There is big lake nearby, which has ample water. I can carry all the fishes to that lake."

The crab then went to his fish friends and told them whatever the

crane had said. Accordingly, everyday some fishes came to the edge of the lake so that the crane could take them to the other lake. The crane took them instead to another spot, and ate them.

One day, as the water had become too scarce, the crab asked the crane to save his life also. The crane agreed and carried the crab happily on its back. As the crane was flying, the crab saw a heap of fish bones below. He asked the crane, "Friend, I don't see any big lake here."

The crane replied, "Fool! There is no lake anywhere. It is my trick to eat you all. Now quickly say your prayers. Then let me kill you."

Hearing this, the crab swiftly caught hold of the crane's neck with his claws and pressed hard till it died. He then returned to the lake and told everyone, "Friends, that crane has killed our fish friends and now I have killed him to save all of us."

Moral of the Story

He who is wise is stronger than the strong.

7 THE LION AND THE HARE

Once a powerful lion named Bhasuraka lived in a jungle. He killed many animals for his food every day. One day, all the animals of the jungle went to him and said, "Let us make an agreement, every day we will send you one animal for your food. In that way, you need not even go for hunting."

Hearing this, the lion said, "I will agree with what you arrange. But if you fail to send one animal a day, I shall kill all of you."

As agreed, each day, at noon, an animal presented itself without fail before the lion, for his meal. One day it was the turn of a hare. While going to the lion, the hare thought, "Hmmm, I have to trick the lion to escape from his jaws. This way, I can also save other animals from him."

A little way ahead, he saw a big and very deep well. He peeped into it and saw his own reflection in the water. At first, he was frightened

by his own reflection, but suddenly got an idea to fool the big lion. He proceeded very slowly and reached the lion's den at the close of the day.

The lion was very hungry and when he saw the small hare, he angrily said, "Tiny creature! How dare you come so late? And, you are too small to fill my big stomach. I will kill all the animals in the morning."

The hare quickly bowed to him and said politely, "My lord, the offence is not mine or other animals. Seeing my small size they sent

five hares. But that big lion over there ate four hares and left me to tell you this." Bhasuraka got impatient and roared, "What? Lion? Other than me?"

The hare said, "That lion said, call him out to come and meet me here. I am the king of the forest and there shall be a trial of strength between the two of us." Bhasuraka said, "Come on, take me to him.

Let us decide today, who's the real king."

The hare asked the lion to follow him. They both reached the old well. Now, the hare said, "Seeing you, the imposter has slipped into his fortress. Let me show this fellow to you."

Bhasuraka looked into the well and seeing his own reflection in the water, gave a tremendous roar and the echo came out at him. Then he jumped into the well to kill the other lion. Thus the foolish lion died and all the animals in the jungle lived happily ever after.

Moral of the Story

Intelligence is power.

8

THE BLUE JACKAL

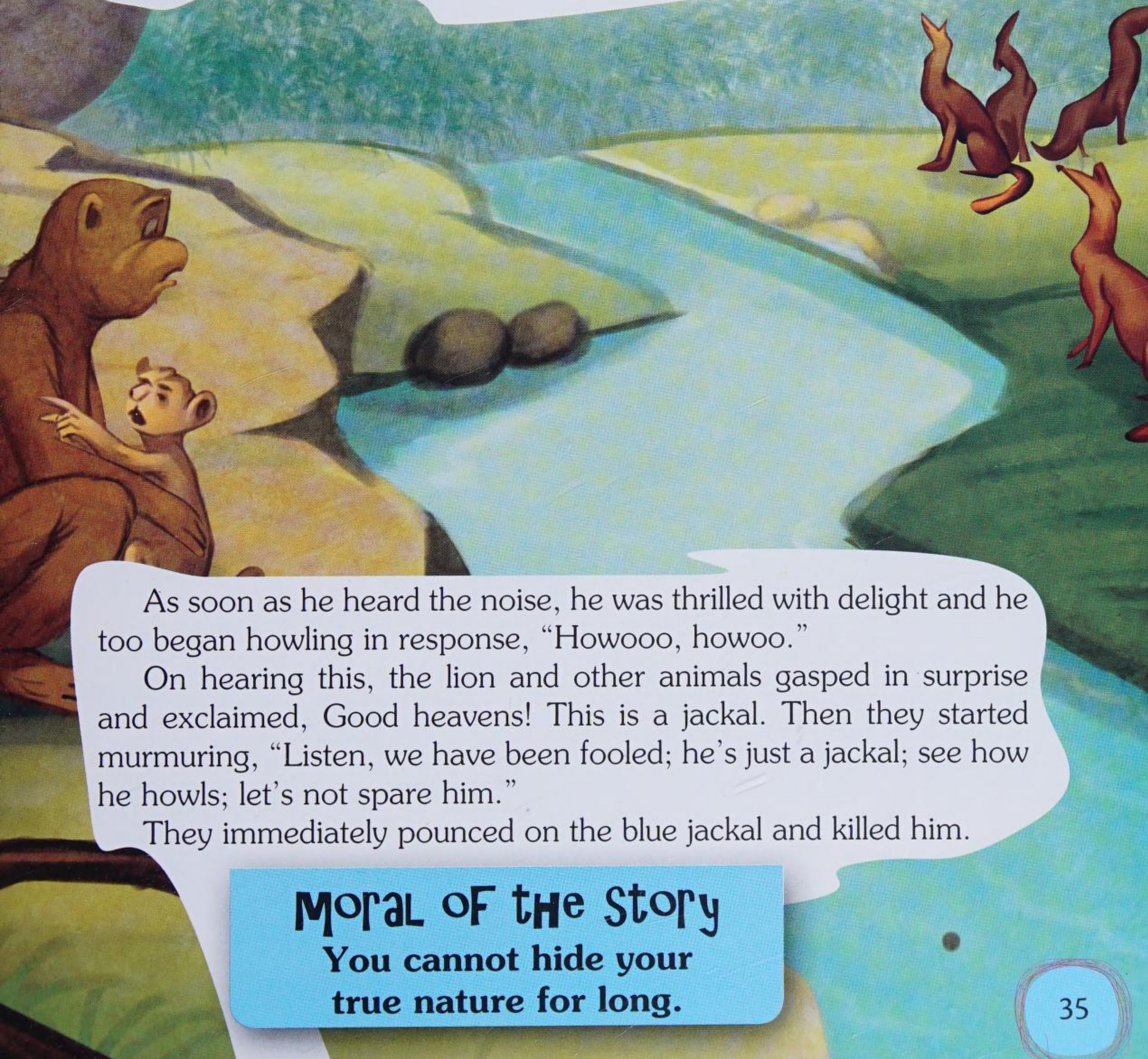
Once a jackal named Chandaraka lived in a forest. One day, walking in search of food, he reached a nearby town. There he was chased by a group of dogs. Frightened, the jackal ran here and there and finally entered a washerman's house, where he tumbled into a huge

drum of blue dye. By this time the dogs stopped chasing him and ran away. The poor jackal clambered out of the drum and ran back to the forest. When the other animals in the forest saw him, they ran crying out, "Ayo, ayo, what weirdly colored animal is this, that has

come into our midst?

The jackal noticed the fear in all the animals. He called them and said, "Friends, I have been sent by God as his special creation and now I will be your king. You will obey my orders or face the wrath of Gods." They readily accepted him as their king. Now the jackal appointed the lion his minister, the wolf his sentry and the tiger his commander.

Every day, the lion, the wolf and the tiger killed other animals and brought them as food for the jackal. The jackal enjoyed his life and even started to forget who he was. One day, when he was holding the court, a group of jackals nearby started howling.



As soon as he heard the noise, he was thrilled with delight and he too began howling in response, "Howooo, howoo."

On hearing this, the lion and other animals gasped in surprise and exclaimed, Good heavens! This is a jackal. Then they started murmuring, "Listen, we have been fooled; he's just a jackal; see how he howls; let's not spare him."

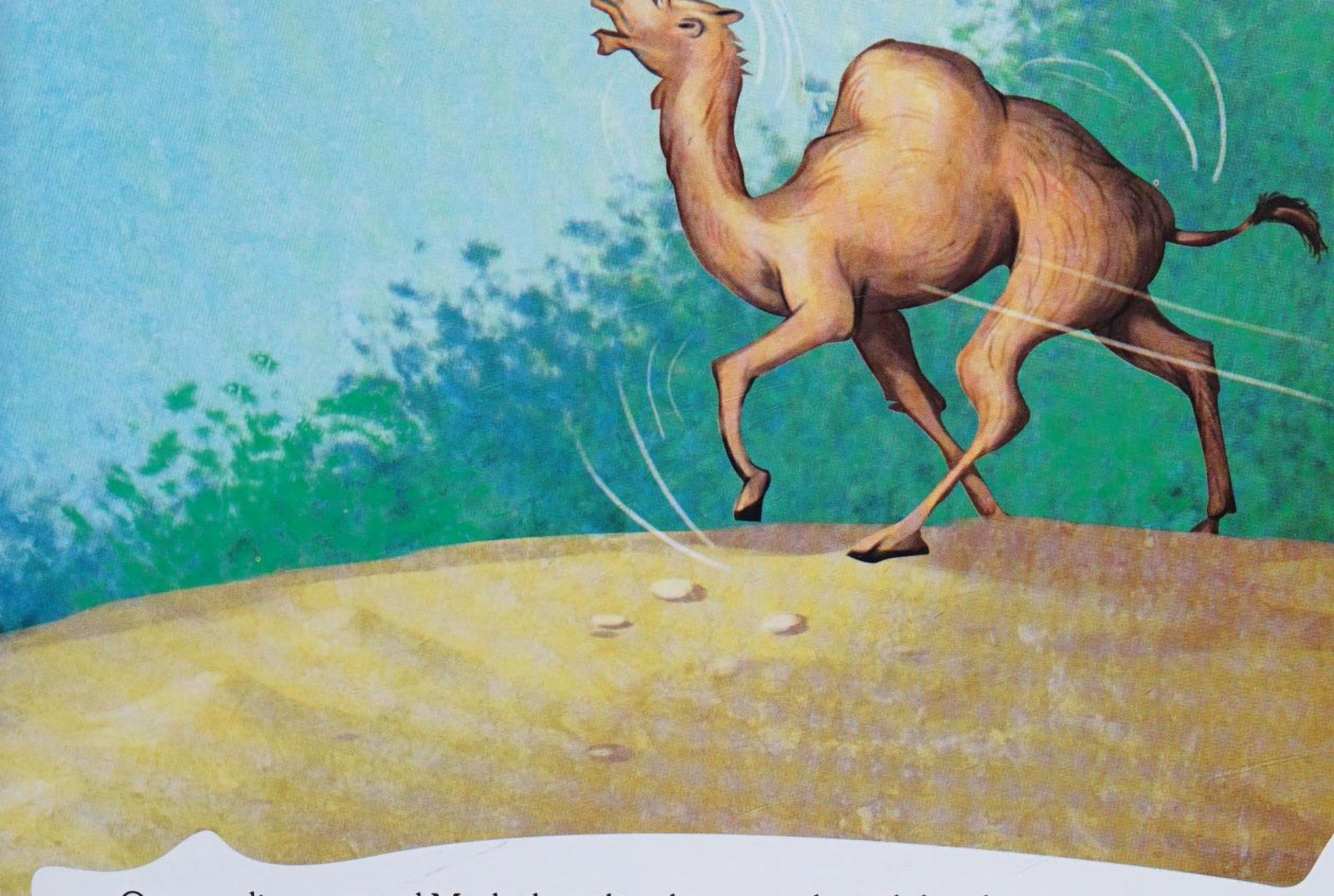
They immediately pounced on the blue jackal and killed him.

Moral of the Story

You cannot hide your true nature for long.

9

THE CAMEL AND THE THREE FRIENDS



Once, a lion named Madotkata lived in a jungle with his three assistants - a leopard, a jackal and a crow. One day, they went in search of a prey. Suddenly, they saw a camel named Kradanaka who had lost his way. The lion wondered, "What is this funny looking creature doing in my kingdom?"

The jackal said, "My Lord! This is a camel, which can be easily killed."

The lion was horrified and said, "No, no, I can't do this. He has come here as our guest." He then went towards the camel and asked him to introduce himself. The camel said, "Sir, I belong to a caravan. I have lost my way. Please help me."

The lion said, "I am the king of this forest. Stay here and enjoy your freedom." The camel agreed to stay.

One day, in a fight between the lion and a wild elephant, the lion was badly hurt. He became too weak to hunt and so he ordered his assistants to bring food for him. The lazy assistants could not find a single prey even after a long search.

The jackal said, "If only the camel were to be killed we could all have food for several days. But the lion will not kill him." So, they thought of a plan.

All the three approached the lion and told him very humbly,

"Our lord, we have not found any prey. Why not kill the camel?"

The lion said angrily, "You fools! How can I kill an animal who has come to me for protection?" But they continued, "Dear lord, hearing that you are unwell and cannot go hunting, the camel has himself offered to become your food. It is now up to you to decide to accept his wishes or not."

The lion thought for a while and said, "Is that so! I am pleased by his devotion to me. Bring him here."

As per the plan, the leopard and the crow along with the camel went to the lion. The cunning assistants said, "Oh lord, we cannot see you dying of hunger. Please accept us as your food." But the lion refused.

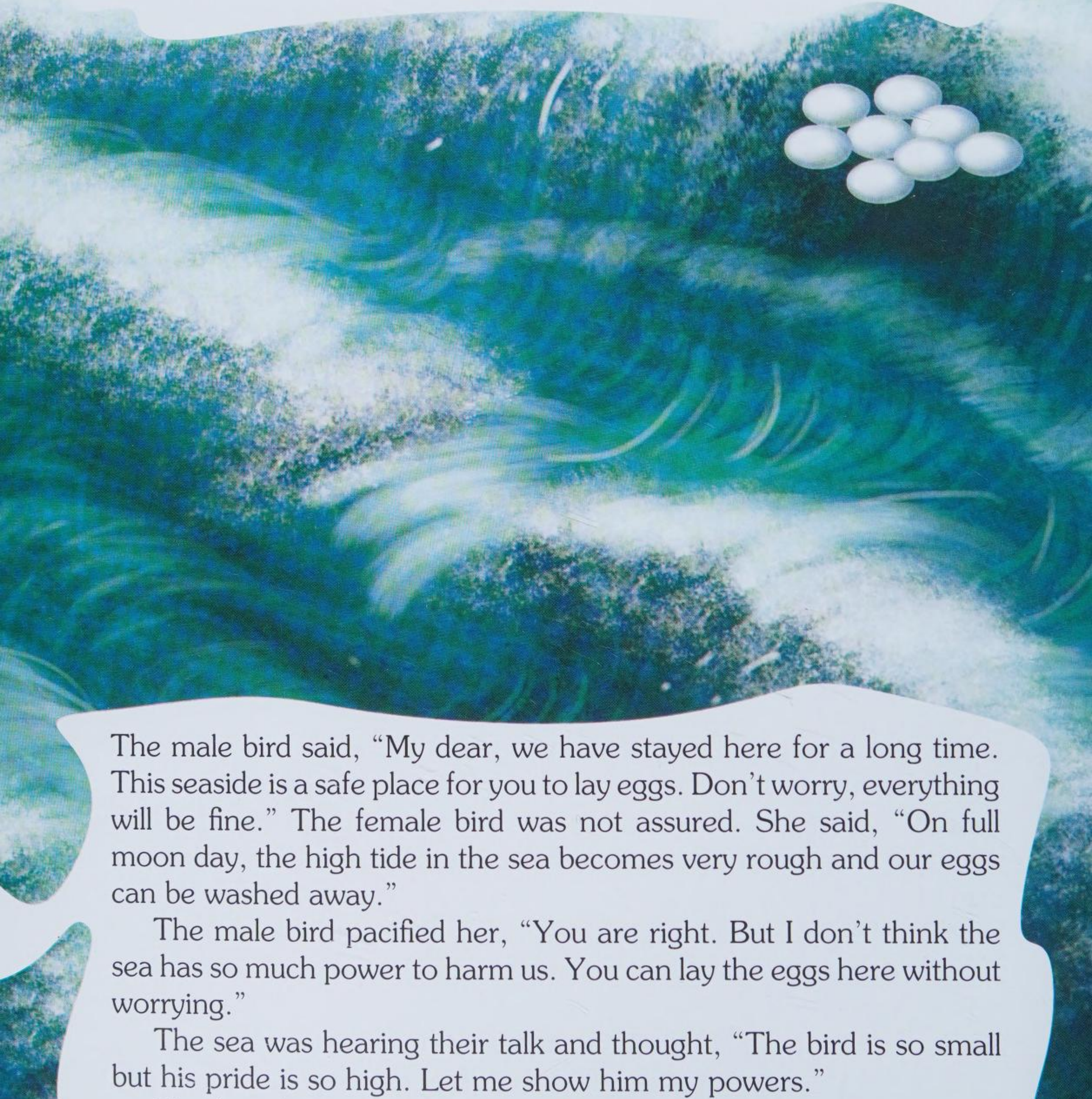
Seeing this the camel thought, "I should also offer myself to the king to show my loyalty." He was confident that the lion would not kill him. He went forward and said, "My lord, please accept me as your food." Not wanting to let go the situation, the three assistants pounced on the camel and killed him.

Moral of the Story

Good men should leave the masters surrounded by wicked persons.

10 THE PHEASANTS AND THE SEA

Once a pair of pheasants lived on a tree near the sea. One day, the female pheasant asked the male pheasant to find a safe place to lay her eggs. She was scared that the sea would wash away her nest.



The male bird said, "My dear, we have stayed here for a long time. This seaside is a safe place for you to lay eggs. Don't worry, everything will be fine." The female bird was not assured. She said, "On full moon day, the high tide in the sea becomes very rough and our eggs can be washed away."

The male bird pacified her, "You are right. But I don't think the sea has so much power to harm us. You can lay the eggs here without worrying."

The sea was hearing their talk and thought, "The bird is so small but his pride is so high. Let me show him my powers."

The female bird laid her eggs. When they went away in search of

food, the sea sent a huge wave, which washed away the eggs. When the birds returned they found their eggs missing. The female cried out, "Did I not tell you that the sea is more powerful than us? See, it has washed away our eggs."

The male bird yelled, "Don't worry my dear, I will show the sea who I'm. I will drink the entire water of the sea. That will be the right lesson."

The female said, "My dear, how can you talk like this. Let us take our problem to our king, the Garuda. You cannot fight the mighty

sea alone." The other birds also joined them and went to Garuda, who took them to his master Lord Vishnu.

Garuda, pleaded to Lord Vishnu, "Oh Lord, please help my fellow beings. The cruel sea has snatched their eggs."

Lord Vishnu promised to help them. He went to the sea with the birds. He called out, "You cruel ocean! Give them back their eggs or I will dry you up."

On seeing the Lord, the ocean pleaded, "Forgive me Lord, I will return the eggs. Please do not punish me." Saying this, he threw the eggs back on the sea shore.

Moral of the Story

He who fights without knowing the enemy's strength loses the fight.

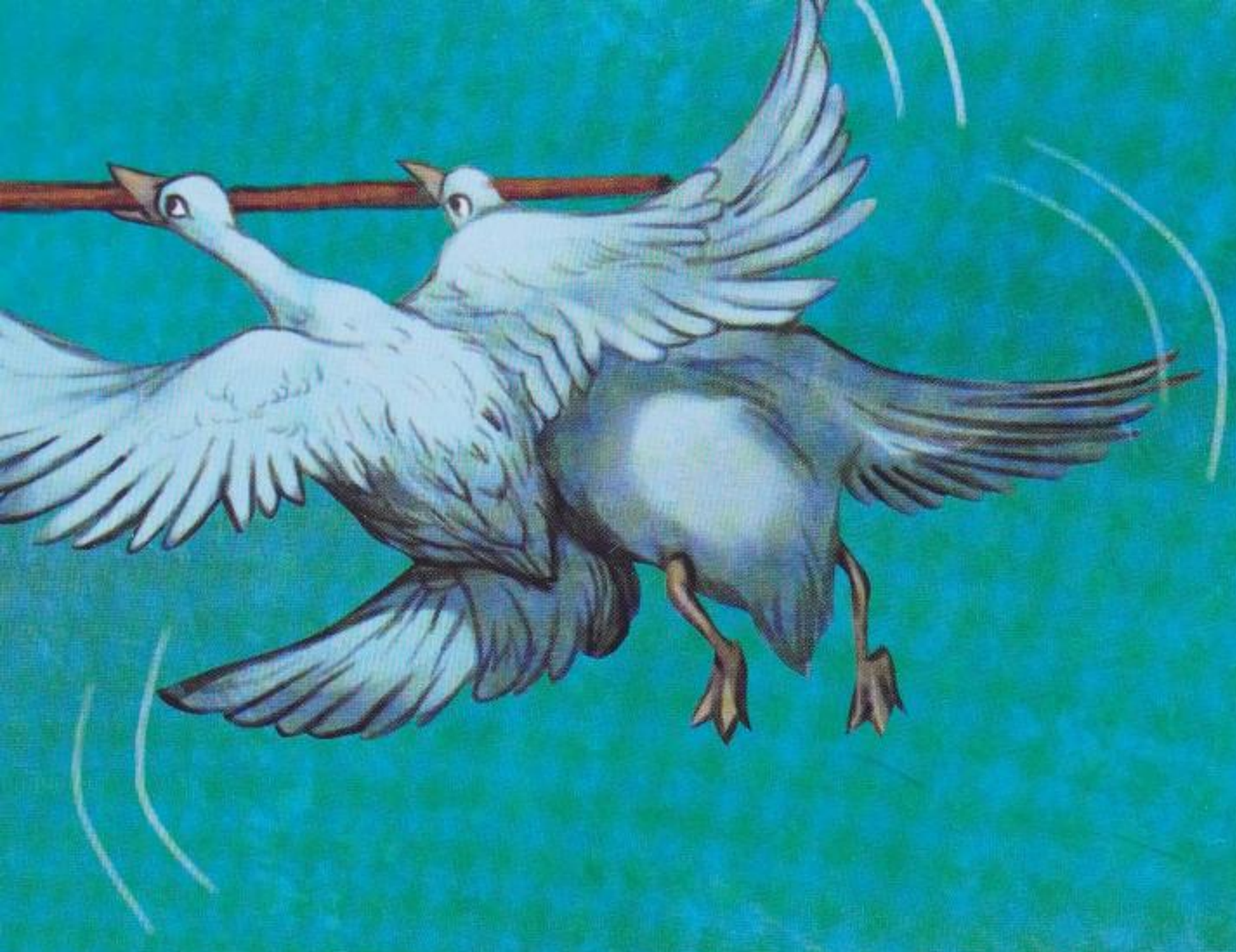
The turtle said, "Friends! I can't fly but I have an idea. Bring a piece of wood shaped like a stick." When the swans brought a stick, the turtle held it firmly in the middle with its teeth and told the swans, "Now take hold of this stick firmly in your beaks, one at each end and in this way we can all fly safely to another place."

The swans said, "That is a very good idea. But remember you have to keep your mouth shut as you hold the stick when flying, otherwise you will fall down."

So, the plan was carried out. As the swans flew on their way from the lake they passed over the nearby city. The people of the city began to look at the strange sight and started shouting, "See, the turtle is flying. He is flying with the birds. Has anyone seen a turtle flying?" Hearing this, the turtle got excited and wanted to speak to them. He opened his mouth to say something, but he fell down on the ground and died.

Moral of the Story

Those who do not listen the advice of their well-wishers meet their end.



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12

THE THREE FISHES

Once upon a time, in a lake, there lived three very large fishes, Anagatavidhata, Pratyutpannamati and Yadbhavishya. Anagatavidhata and Pratyutpannamati were very hard working and practical in their approach, whereas Yadbhavishya believed more in

fate and had a laid back approach to life. One evening, two fishermen were passing near the lake and talking among themselves, "This lake is full of good fish; let us come back tomorrow and catch some fish."

Hearing this, Anagatavidhata and Pratyutpannamati told their friends, "We are in a great danger. Tomorrow the two fishermen will come to catch us. We should leave from here and go to the other end of this lake and hide ourselves." Hearing them, Yadbhavishya

laughed and said, "You cowards! Why should we leave this place? We have been living here for a long time. So far none of our friends have been fished out by anyone. If we are fated to die nobody can save us. Therefore, my decision is not to go." But Anagatavidhata and Pratyutpannamati quickly swam to the other side of the lake with some of their friends. The next morning, two fishermen came to the lake as planned and cast their nets. Poor Yadbhavishya along with many other fish who believed in luck were caught in the net.

Moral of the Story

Those who leave things to fate and believe in luck destroy themselves.

13

THE ELEPHANT AND THE SPARROW

A pair of sparrows lived on a Tamala tree. The female sparrow laid her eggs in the nest built on this tree. One day, a wild elephant, greatly tormented by the heat, came to this tree seeking shade. Blind with heat, he started snapping at the same branch on which the sparrows had built their nest. As the branch broke and fell off, the sparrow's eggs were smashed. Then the elephant left the place.

The sparrows were sad looking at their broken eggs.

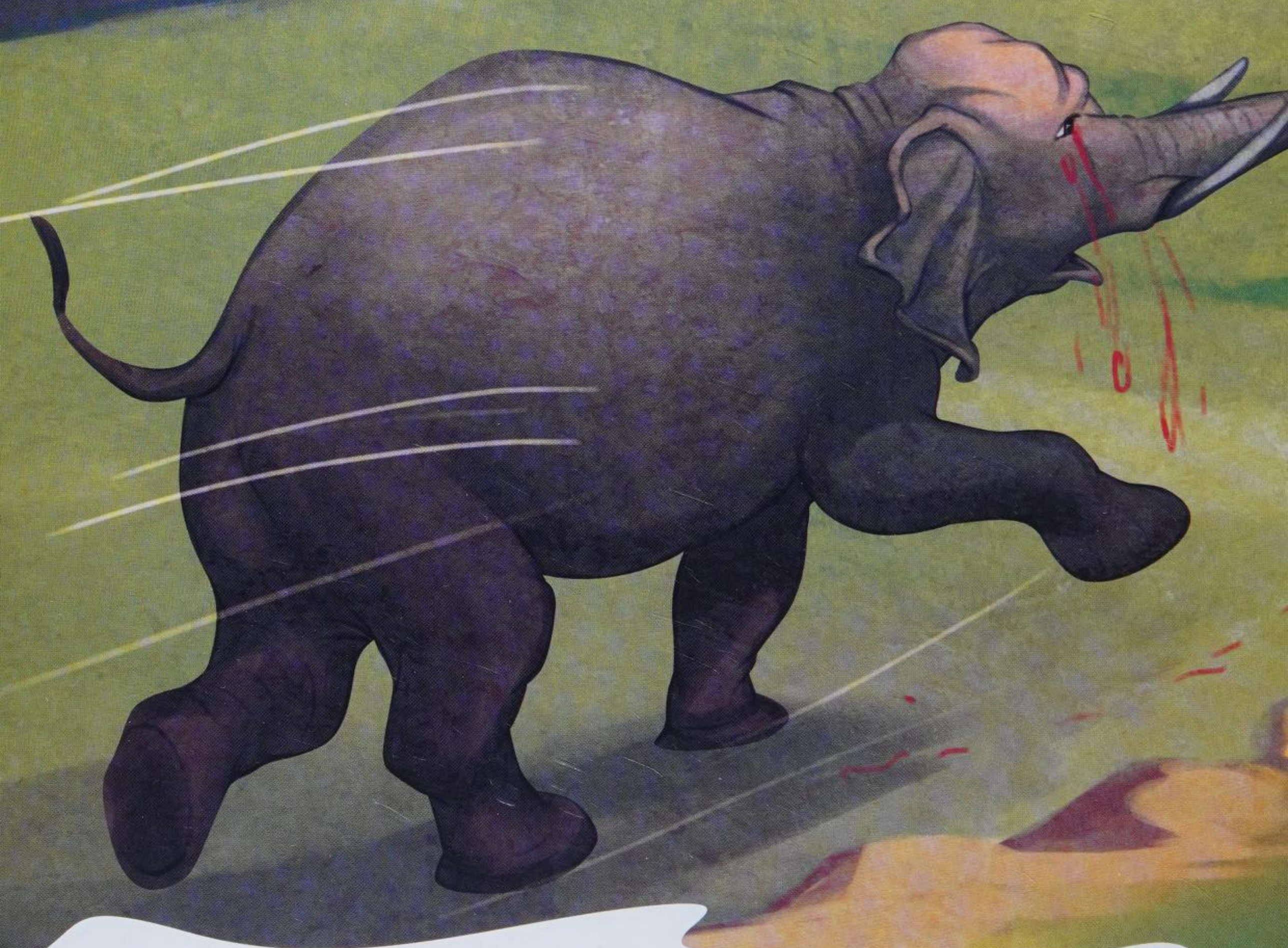
Seeing this, a woodpecker, who lived in a nearby tree went to the sparrows and said, "Dear friends, I am feeling very angry at the elephant. I will help you to take your revenge. I have a friend, a fly, who is very clever. Come with me to him."

The woodpecker took the sparrows to his friend, the fly and told the entire story.

Hearing their story, the fly said, "I will surely help. I will take you to my friend, a frog who can help us to kill the elephant."

Thus the fly took the sparrows and the woodpecker to his friend, the frog and told the story.

Hearing their story, the frog told the fly, "Go to the elephant and sing a sweet tune into his ears. He will become happy and will close his eyes." He then told the woodpecker, "When he closes his eyes you scoop them out. The elephant will then become blind and feel thirsty. When he is thirsty, he will go in search of water. I will go to



a swamp and begin croaking. Thinking that there is water nearby, he will step into the swamp; there he will sink and die."

All of them agreed to his plan and did as was told. When the woodpecker scooped the eyes of the elephant, he cried with pain and looked for water. As planned, they made the elephant follow the croaking sound of the frog sitting near the swamp. The elephant

died in the swamp; struggling hard to come out. The sparrows were happy as they had taken their revenge. They thanked their friends and returned home.

Moral of the Story

In times of need we should seek the help of our friends.

14

THE MONKEY AND THE SPARROW

Once on a very cold and frosty evening, a group of monkeys came under a tree to protect themselves. There the monkeys collected dry leaves and twigs and put red berries on it, thinking that they are red embers which would create fire.

A sparrow named Suchimukha who was watching this, flew down and admonished the monkeys, "Friends, what are you doing? Those red things you have collected are not embers. They are just red berries!"

But the monkeys didn't listen to her. They started blowing air on the pile of berries collected by them.

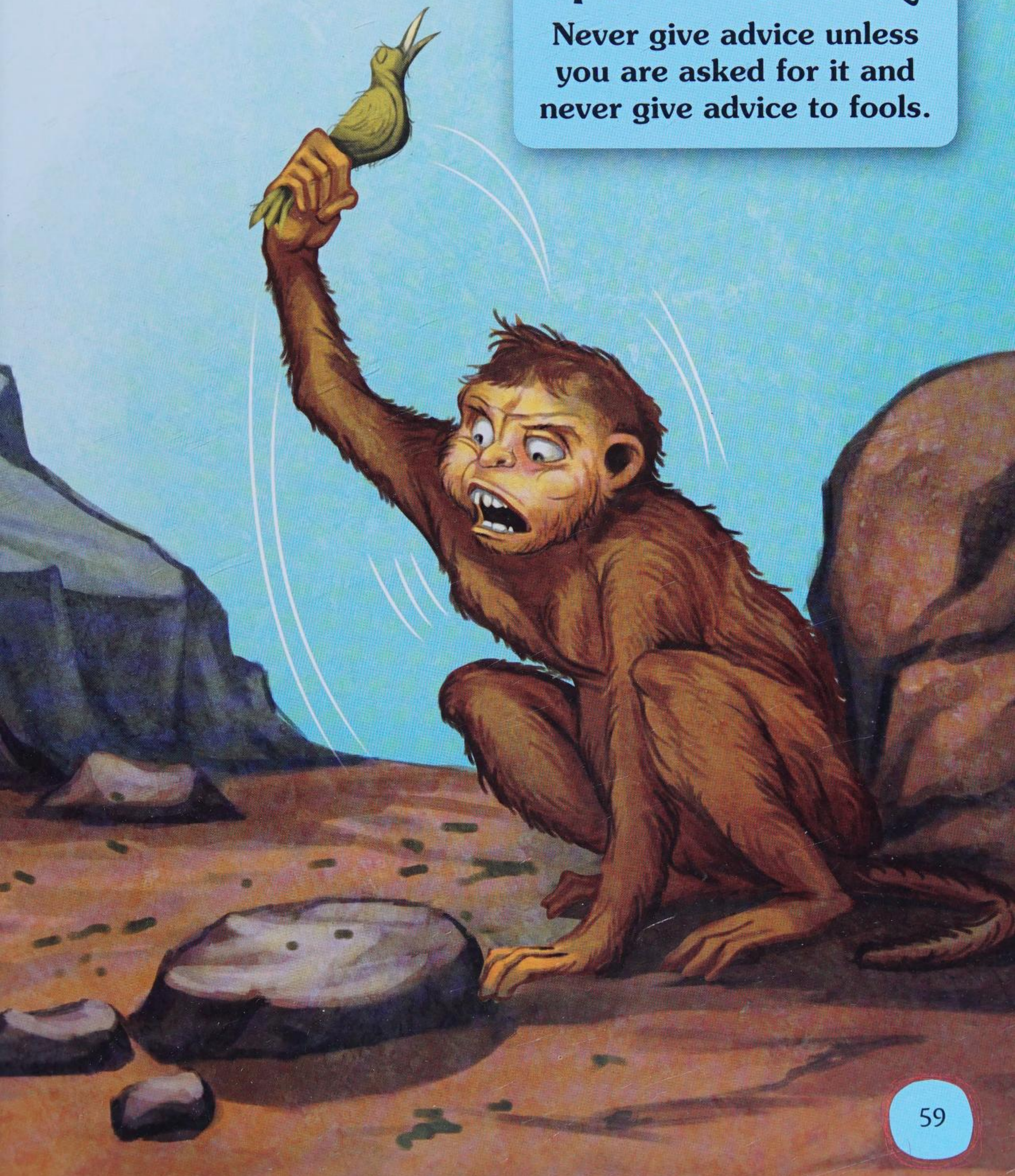
The sparrow told them again, "Don't waste your time and better go and find shelter in some covered place?"

One of the monkeys from the group replied in anger, "Did we ask your advice? Who are you to poke your nose into our affairs?"

But the sparrow ignored him and kept on advising them. So the monkeys got wild and when she came close to a monkey, he seized and dashed her against a rock and she died.

Moral of the Story

Never give advice unless you are asked for it and never give advice to fools.



15

THE KING AND THE MONKEY

Once there lived a king with his pet monkey. The monkey served the king as his personal servant and was allowed to enter anywhere inside the palace.

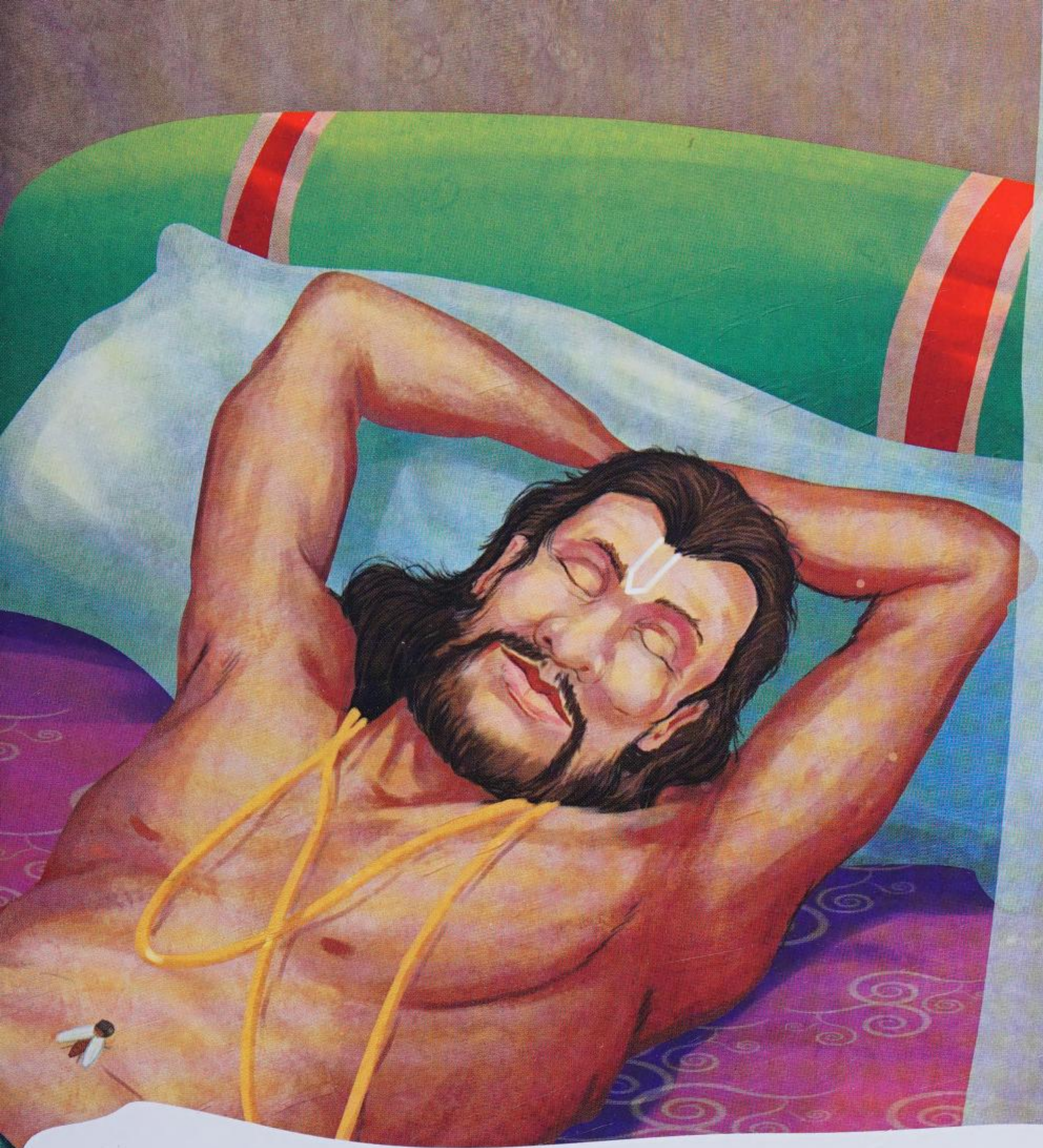
The ministers of the king felt that the king was giving undue attention to the monkey. They went to the king and said, "By giving the monkey privilege, you are dooming yourself."

"A monkey cannot take the place of wise and sincere servants. Some day he will prove to be a danger to you!"

The king, instead of thinking over their advice, instead got angry.

Days went by. One afternoon, after a heavy lunch the king went to his bedroom. The monkey also followed him. As he lay on the bed, he told the monkey, "I am very tired. I am going to sleep. Don't allow anyone to disturb me when I am sleeping."

The monkey started fanning the king with a hand fan. Suddenly, a fly landed on the king's bed. It flew here and there and finally sat on the king.



The monkey tried to drive the fly away with the fan, but it would go missing for the moment and come back again. This went on for quite some time and the monkey was irritated. He thought, "Aha! How dare this fly disturb my master? Let me teach him a lesson."

When he saw the fly sitting by the king's side, he took the dagger lying nearby in his hand and pushed it down with all force on the fly. The fly flew away but after some time, it came again and sat on the king's chest. Again the monkey aimed at the fly. Alas! The fly dodged the blow and flew away with a whiff, while the blow from the dagger fell on the king's chest. The king died, leaving the monkey wondering about his act.

Moral of the Story

You should not have a fool as a servant.

16 DHARMABUDDHI AND PAPABUDDHI

In a small town, there lived two friends named Dharmabuddhi and Papabuddhi. They travelled to far-off lands to earn money. Dharmabuddhi's talents helped them to earn lots of money in just few years and then they both decided to return home.

While returning Papabuddhi told Dharmabuddhi, "Friend! Let us each take out some money and bury the rest in a safe spot before we go home. Whenever we need money, we can come here and take the money."

Dharmabuddhi readily agreed and they both buried their money. After sometime, Papabuddhi went there alone and took away all the money.

Next morning he went to Dharmabuddhi and said, "I need some money. Can we go to the forest and take out some money?"

They went to the forest and when they dug the pit, they found it empty. Papabuddhi started shouting at his friend, "You have stolen all our money! Give me my share right now or I will take you to the king's court for justice."

Dharmabuddhi tried to convince his friend that he had not stolen the money but Papabuddhi was not ready to listen. So they both went to the king's court and told the whole story.

The king asked them, "Who do you have as witness?"

Papabuddhi replied, "I have the forest God as the witness."

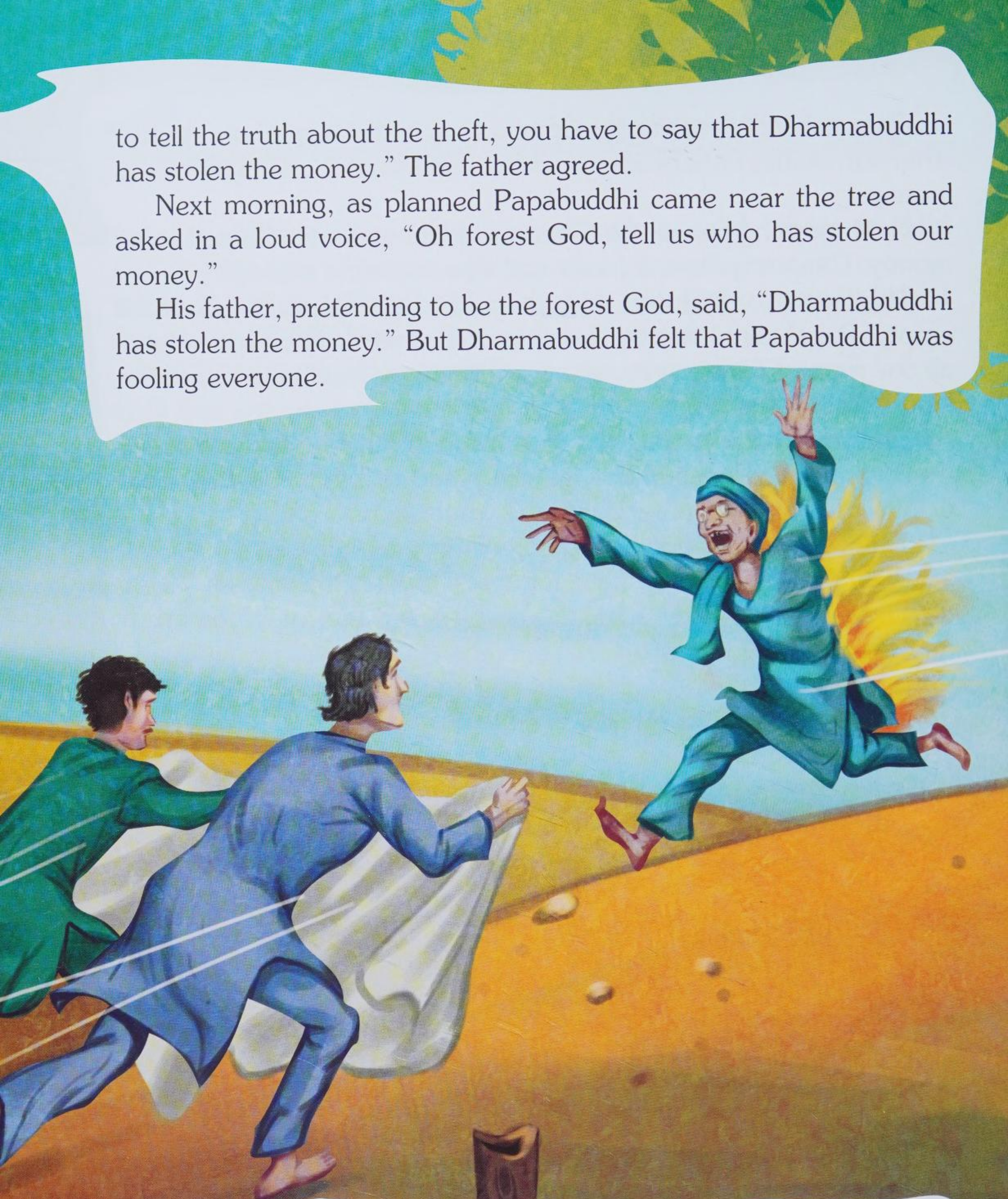
The king then said, "Alright, we will go to the forest tomorrow and after hearing the forest God's words, the case will be decided."

When Papabuddhi reached home, he pleaded with his father, "Please hide yourself inside the big tree near the pit. Tomorrow, I will come there with the king and the other people. When they ask you

to tell the truth about the theft, you have to say that Dharmabuddhi has stolen the money." The father agreed.

Next morning, as planned Papabuddhi came near the tree and asked in a loud voice, "Oh forest God, tell us who has stolen our money."

His father, pretending to be the forest God, said, "Dharmabuddhi has stolen the money." But Dharmabuddhi felt that Papabuddhi was fooling everyone.



Immediately Dharmabuddhi slipped out and collected some dry leaves, threw them around the tree and set it on fire. Soon, the smoke surrounded the place and the father who was inside the tree began to cough. People were shocked to see a half burnt man coming out of the tree.

The ashamed father told them about his son's plan to cheat Dharmabuddhi. On hearing this, the king at once declared Dharmabuddhi innocent and punished Papabuddhi.

Moral of the Story

Avoid the company of wicked or you will pay a heavy price for it.

17

THE SWAN AND THE OWL

Once a swan lived peacefully in a pond surrounded by many trees. One day, an owl came to the pond and exclaimed, "Wow! What a nice place. I have never seen such a beautiful place before!"

When the swan saw the owl watching the pond, he asked him, "What are you doing here?"

The owl wanted to be the swan's friend and so he said, "Are you the swan who has been living here in this pond for a long time? I have heard about your goodness and had always wanted to be your friend."

The swan was pleased by these words and said, "My friend, please be my guest. I will be happy to be your host."

Days passed and they became very good friends. One day, the owl said to the swan, "Friend, it's been long since I came here as your guest.

I think it is time I part with you. Please give me your leave."
The swan thanked the owl and they parted.

After some days, the swan thought of visiting his owl friend. He went to the tree where the owl had its nest and called out to him. On seeing the swan, the owl was pleased and said, "I am very happy to see you after a long time. Stay here for some days with me." The swan agreed.

One day, a group of travellers who had camped near the tree were about to leave, when the owl started hooting. So the travellers thought that a misfortune would befall them. One of them shouted, "Kill that owl immediately. It's hooting is an ill omen for us!"

Another one aimed his arrow at the owl, but missed his aim, and accidently the arrow killed the swan. Thus, the innocent swan lost his life.

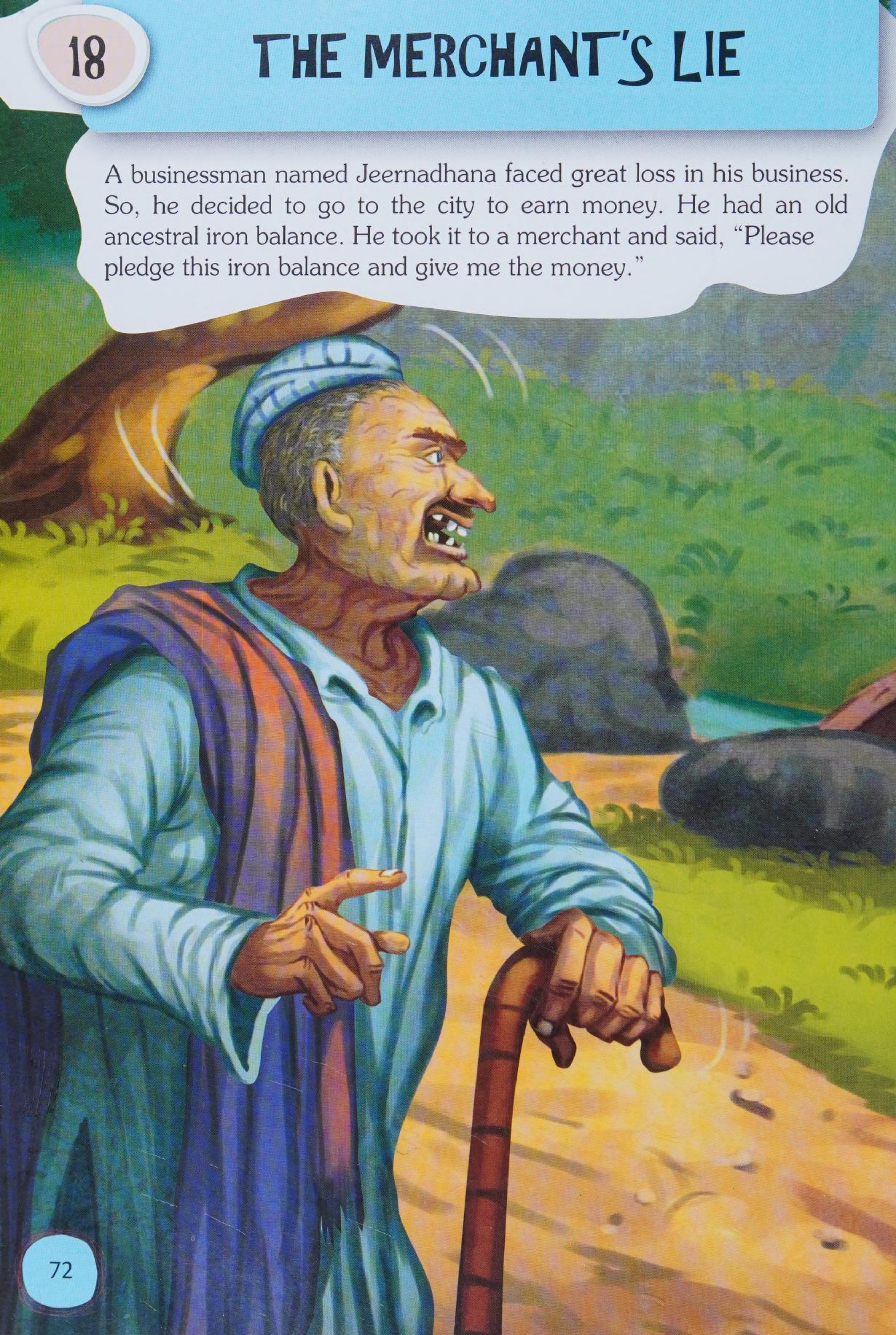
Moral of the Story

It is a grave mistake to make friends with people who are associated with evil.

18

THE MERCHANT'S LIE

A businessman named Jeernadhana faced great loss in his business. So, he decided to go to the city to earn money. He had an old ancestral iron balance. He took it to a merchant and said, "Please pledge this iron balance and give me the money."



After travelling to many places, he finally returned to his town.

He then went to the merchant and said, "Sir, take the money I borrowed and return my iron balance back."

The merchant was a greedy man. He did not want to return the iron balance. So he said, "Your iron balance is eaten by the rats."

But Jeernadhana didn't believe his words, so he thought of a plan to teach the greedy merchant a lesson. He said, "Oh! Well, if the balance is eaten by the rats, that is surely not your fault.

However, I want to go to the river to take bath. Can you send your son with me to carry the necessary articles for my bath?"

Unaware of the plan, the merchant sent his son with him. Jeernadhana took the boy to the river and hid him in a cave nearby. He then returned to the merchant's house. When the merchant asked him, "Where is my son?"

Jeernadhana replied, "When I was taking bath, a hawk picked up your son and flew away."

"What? How can a hawk carry a boy? Give back my son or I will take you to the king's court," said the angry merchant. Jeernadhana said, "Yes, let us go to the king. I will tell him that if rats can eat the iron balance, why can't a hawk carry a young boy?"

The merchant realized his mistake and said, "Friend, I'm sorry, I lied to you. I will give back your iron balance. Please return my son."

Then Jeernadhana brought back the merchant's son and the merchant returned him his iron balance.

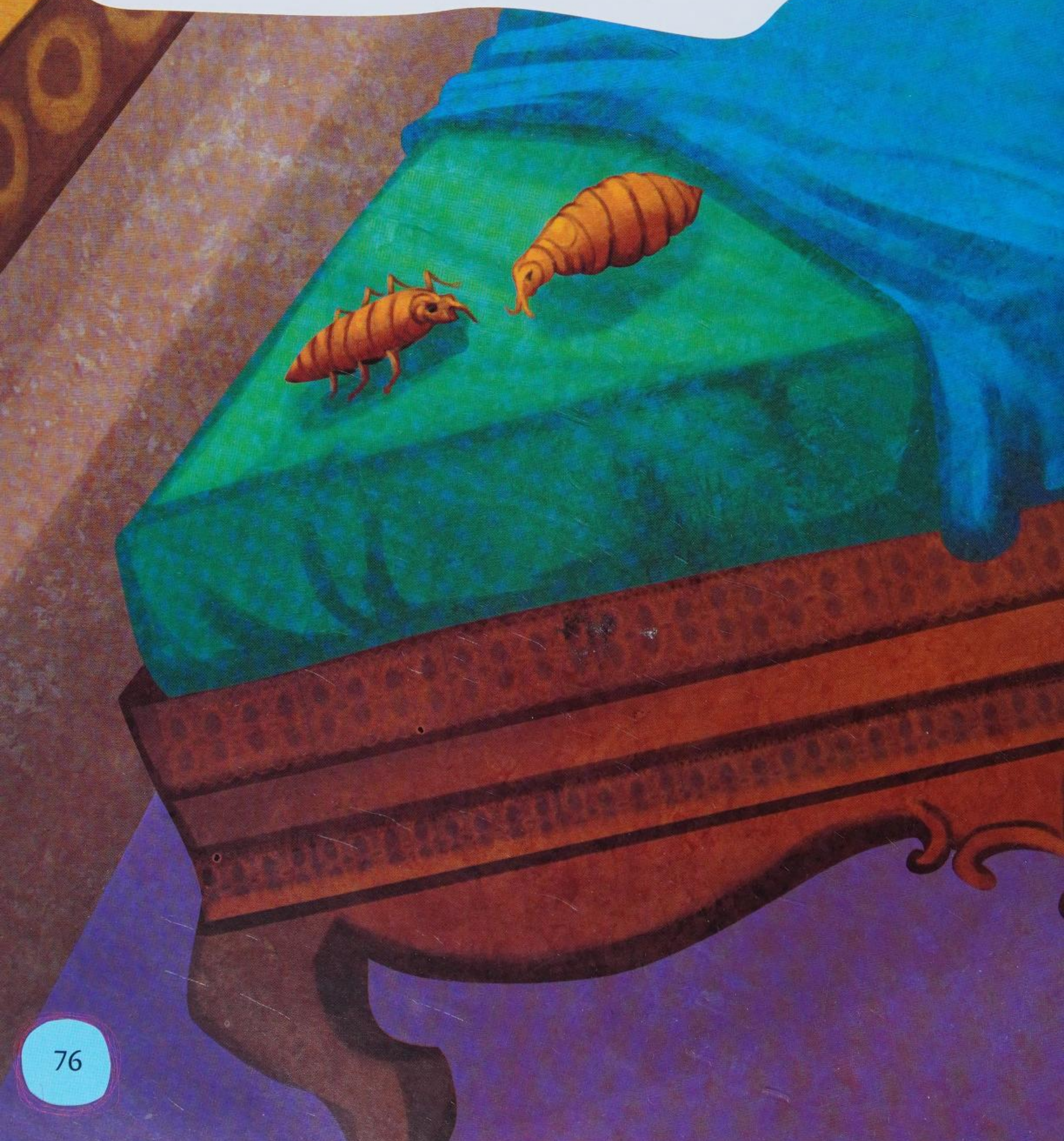
Moral of the Story

Tit for tat sometimes works well in life.

19

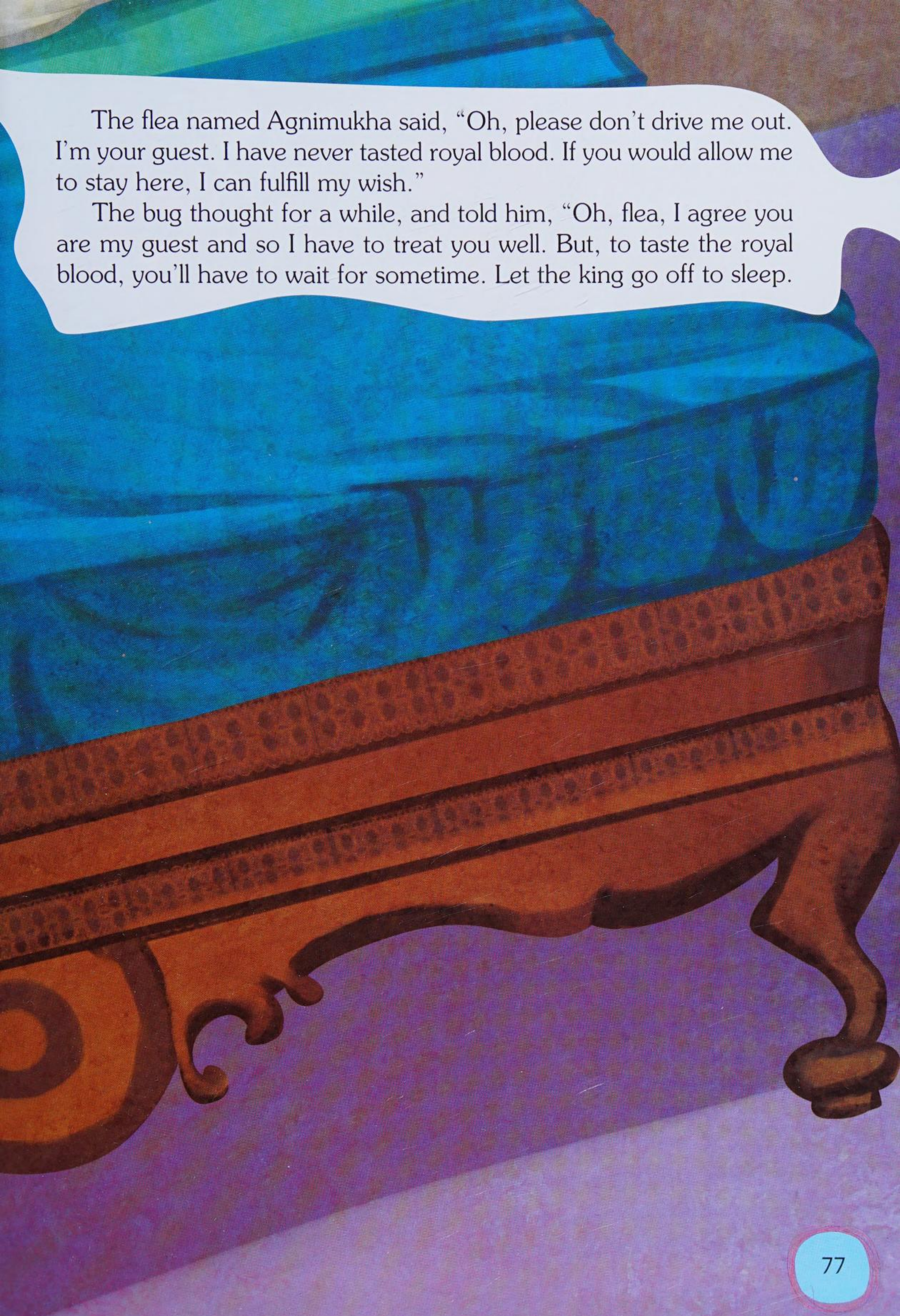
THE BED BUG AND THE POOR FLEA

Once a king lived in a beautiful palace with decorated bedrooms. A bed bug named Mandavisarpini lived in the folds of the white linen bed spreads. One day, the bug saw a flea coming into the bedroom. Since the bug felt that place belonged only to him, he told the flea, "Hey! How dare you come into this room? Get away at once; otherwise the king's servants will kill you!"



The flea named Agnimukha said, "Oh, please don't drive me out. I'm your guest. I have never tasted royal blood. If you would allow me to stay here, I can fulfill my wish."

The bug thought for a while, and told him, "Oh, flea, I agree you are my guest and so I have to treat you well. But, to taste the royal blood, you'll have to wait for sometime. Let the king go off to sleep.



When the king is fast asleep, then you can taste his blood." Just then, the king entered his bedroom. The hungry flea, without listening to the bug's advice started biting the king and sucked his blood. The king got angry and called his servants. When they came, he told them, "You fools, what do you do the whole day? Can't you see that there are bugs in this bed? Come on, search every inch of this bed. I want the bug to be killed immediately."

The bug hid in a corner of the bed, while the flea flew away from the palace and escaped. After a long search, the king's servants got hold of the bug and killed it at once. Thus, by making friend with a stranger flea, the bug lost his life.

Moral of the Story

Think before choosing friends.

20

THE WEAVER AND THE PRINCESS CHARMING

In the city of Ishukapura there lived two friends – a weaver and a carpenter. One day, a procession of the king and his family members was passing through the streets. The weaver saw the princess and was enchanted by her beauty.

Next day, the carpenter found his friend looking sad. He asked, "Dear friend, what is the matter with you?"

The weaver told him about his love for the princess and his desire to marry her.

The carpenter decided to help his friend. He made a huge

mechanical bird looking like Garuda and gave it to the weaver and said, "Now, you dress up like Lord Vishnu and climb on this bird. With the help of this lever, fly to the princess's chamber at the king's palace. Present yourself as Lord Vishnu to her and express your desire to marry her."

That very night the weaver, dressed as Lord Vishnu, mounted on the bird and reached the princess's chamber. When she saw Lord Vishnu descending from the bird, she was taken aback. Then she bowed to him, "Oh Lord Vishnu! I'm blessed by your visit. What can I offer you?"

The weaver replied, "Gracious Lady! It is you who have brought me here. My true divine consort, banished to earth by divine curse.

Tonight, I shall wed you by the Gandharva mode." The princess agreed and they got married. The days flew by.

One day, a palace-guard told the king, "Your majesty, I suspect that the princess has a visitor every night in her room."

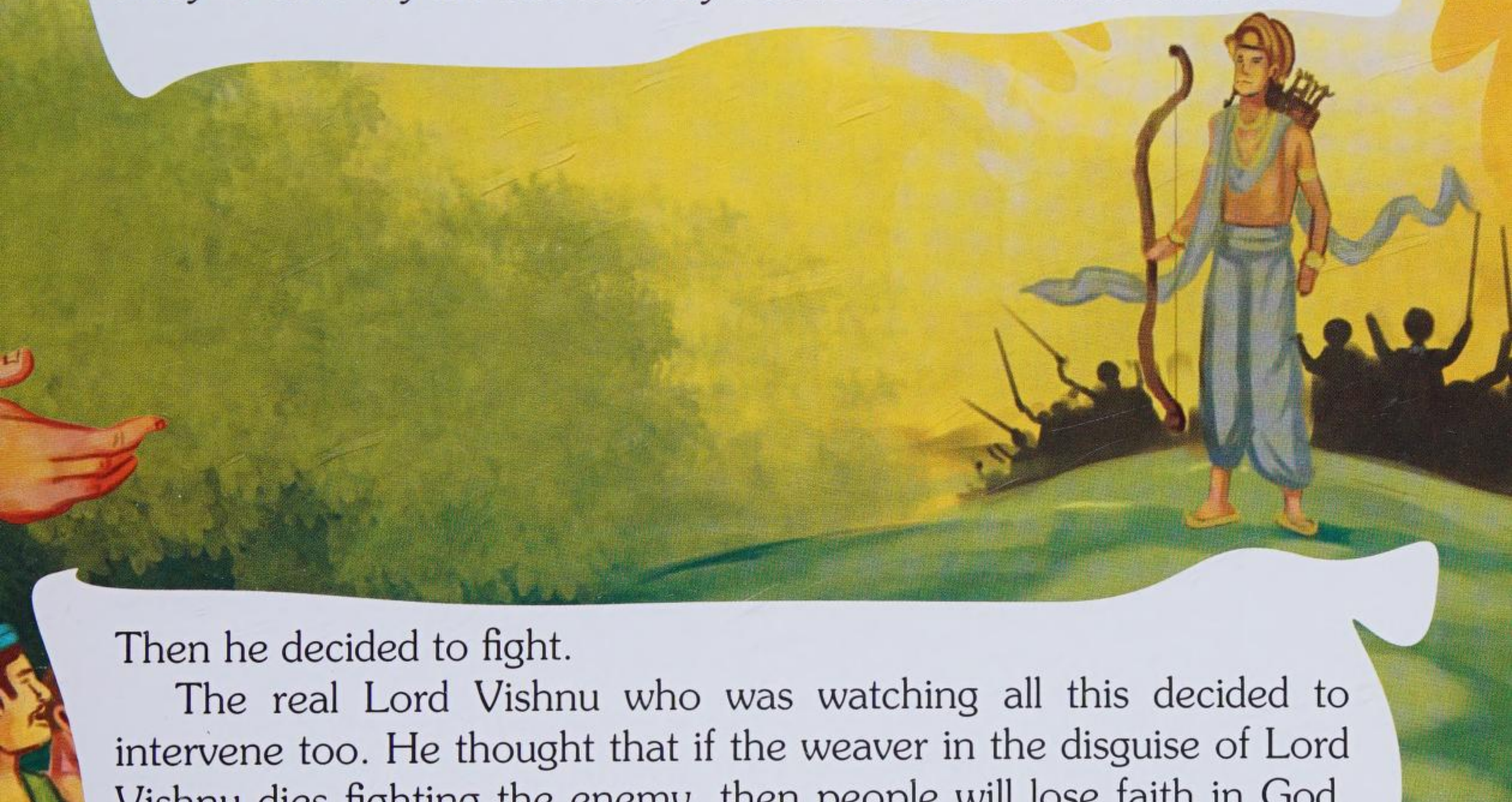
When the king enquired, the princess told him about her marriage

with Lord Vishnu. Hearing this, the king was very happy. When night fell, the king and the queen waited secretly at the window to see Lord Vishnu. On seeing him they became very happy.

One day, the neighbouring king attacked Ishukapura with a large army.

The king was helpless at this sudden attack. He called his daughter and said, "Our kingdom is attacked, and our army is not strong enough to fight this king. Please request your husband to use his power and save our kingdom." That night she sent a word for her husband, "Lord, this is the time when you can prove your strength to my father. Please save our kingdom from the enemy."

The weaver thought, "Should I help the king, or should I run away to save my life and lose my beloved forever. What shall I do?"



Then he decided to fight.

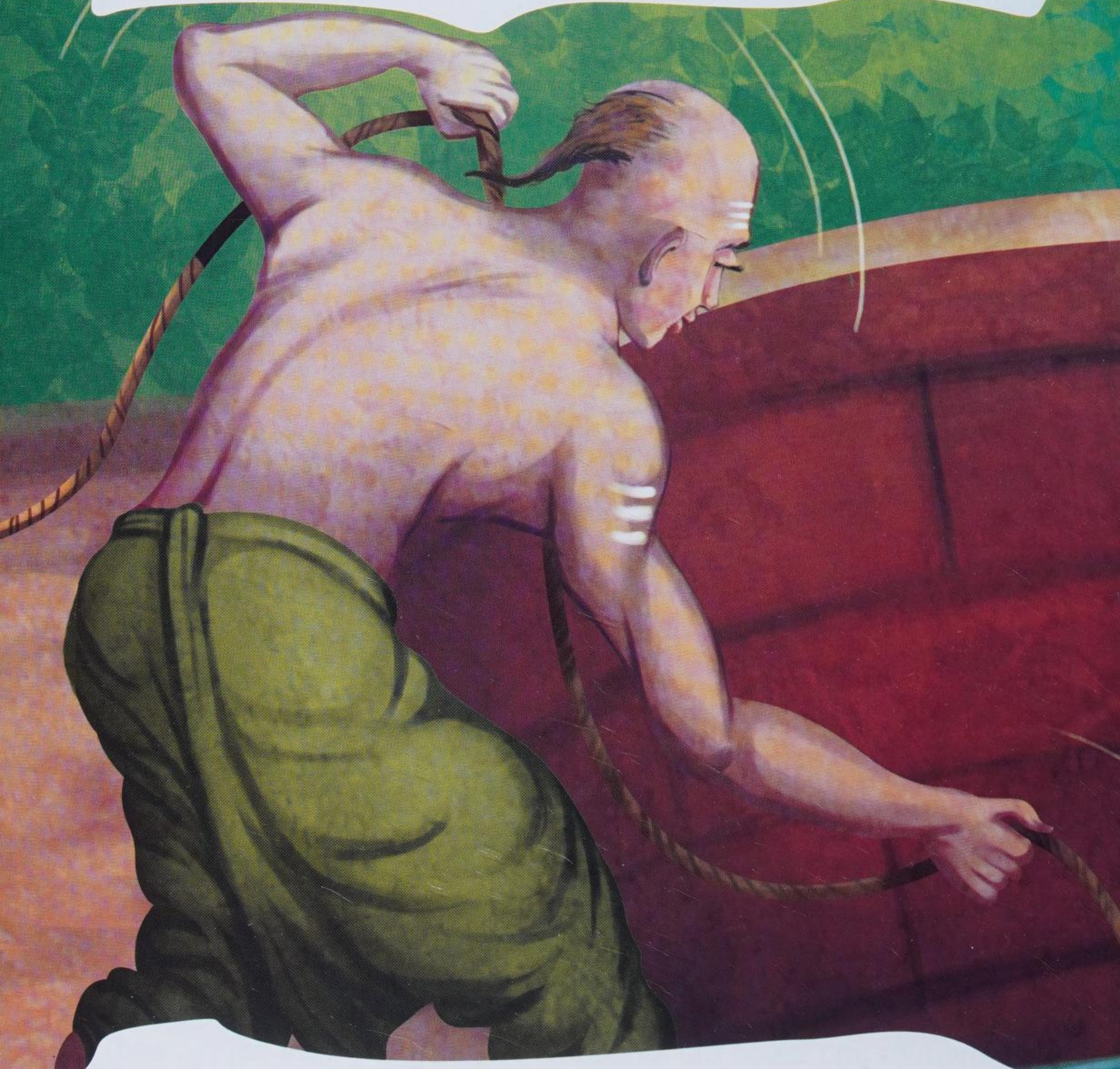
The real Lord Vishnu who was watching all this decided to intervene too. He thought that if the weaver in the disguise of Lord Vishnu dies fighting the enemy, then people will lose faith in God. If the weaver has to win, he should have great powers. So the real God came down, and entered into the body of the weaver. He fought the enemies and saved the kingdom. The king was very happy, and started believing that his daughter had indeed married Lord Vishnu.

Moral of the Story

Even God helps the intelligent.

21 THE UNGRATEFUL MAN

Once there lived a poor and lazy *brahmin* named Yajnadatta. Tired of his nagging wife, he left his home. On the way through the forest,



he heard some voices coming from a well. Peeping into it, he saw a tiger, a monkey, a snake and a man at the bottom of the well. As soon as the tiger saw him he called out, "Sir, please help us."

The *brahmin* said, "No, I can't. You will kill me after I take you out." The tiger replied, "We promise that we will not harm you."

With the help of a rope he pulled them out of the well. The three animals thanked him and said, "Please give us a chance to repay your kindness. But remember; don't trust that man in the well. He may harm you." But out of pity Yajnadatta helped the man to come out of the well also.

The man said, "I am a goldsmith. I live in the nearby town and if ever you require my help, I will be happy to help you." The *brahmin* continued his journey. On the way, he remembered his friend monkey.

The monkey offered him lots of delicious fruits to eat. After that he reached the tiger's place.

On seeing him, the tiger was happy and gave him some jewels belonging to a prince whom he had killed. Then he met his goldsmith friend and asked, "Can you sell these jewels and get me some money?" The moment the goldsmith saw the jewels, he recognized them as the prince's jewels. He thought, "If I will take them to the king, I will certainly be rewarded." He said, "Wait here, I will come back soon."

He went straight to the king's palace and showed the jewels to the king. The king immediately recognized them and asked, "How did you get these jewels? He replied, "I got these jewels from a *brahmin*."

The king ordered to arrest the *brahmin* and put him in the prison. When the *brahmin* was put in the prison, he at once thought of the

snake. The snake came and the *brahmin* requested the snake to help him get out of the prison. The snake said, "I will bite the queen. No medicine will cure her of my poison. I shall see to it that the touch of

your hand alone will be able to cure her. Then they will release you."

The snake bit the queen and no physicians could cure her. The *brahmin* sent word for the king that he had a cure for the queen.

When he touched the queen, she came back to life. The *brahmin* then told the entire story to the king. The king imprisoned the goldsmith and rewarded the *brahmin*. The *brahmin* became rich and lived happily ever after.

Moral of the Story

Always pay heed to the advice of good people.

22

THE LION AND THE CARPENTER

A carpenter named Daivachitha lived in a city. One day when he was cutting wood in a forest, a lion named Suhrudaya Lochana came there. Seeing the lion, the carpenter was so frightened that he thought, "How can I escape from this lion? I must use my wisdom."

Then he bowed and said, "Welcome! My friend, why don't you share my lunch prepared by my wife?" The lion roared, "I am a flesh eating animal, but I shall certainly have a taste of your food."

The lion tasted his food and said, "Very delicious. I'm pleased by your hospitality. You can move freely in this forest."

Daivachitha thanked the lion and said, "My friend, now you must come and meet me everyday; but mind you; always come alone."

So the lion started coming alone everyday for lunch. One day, the lion's assistants – a jackal and a crow - who were hungry asked the lion, "Lord, tell us where you go everyday?"

Lion replied, "Nowhere in particular." But when they asked him the same question repeatedly, he curtly replied, "I have a friend, a carpenter who brings me food everyday."

The jackal said, "Sir, take us with you too. We will also taste his food."

The lion thought for a while and then said, "Ok! Then follow me tomorrow when I go to him."

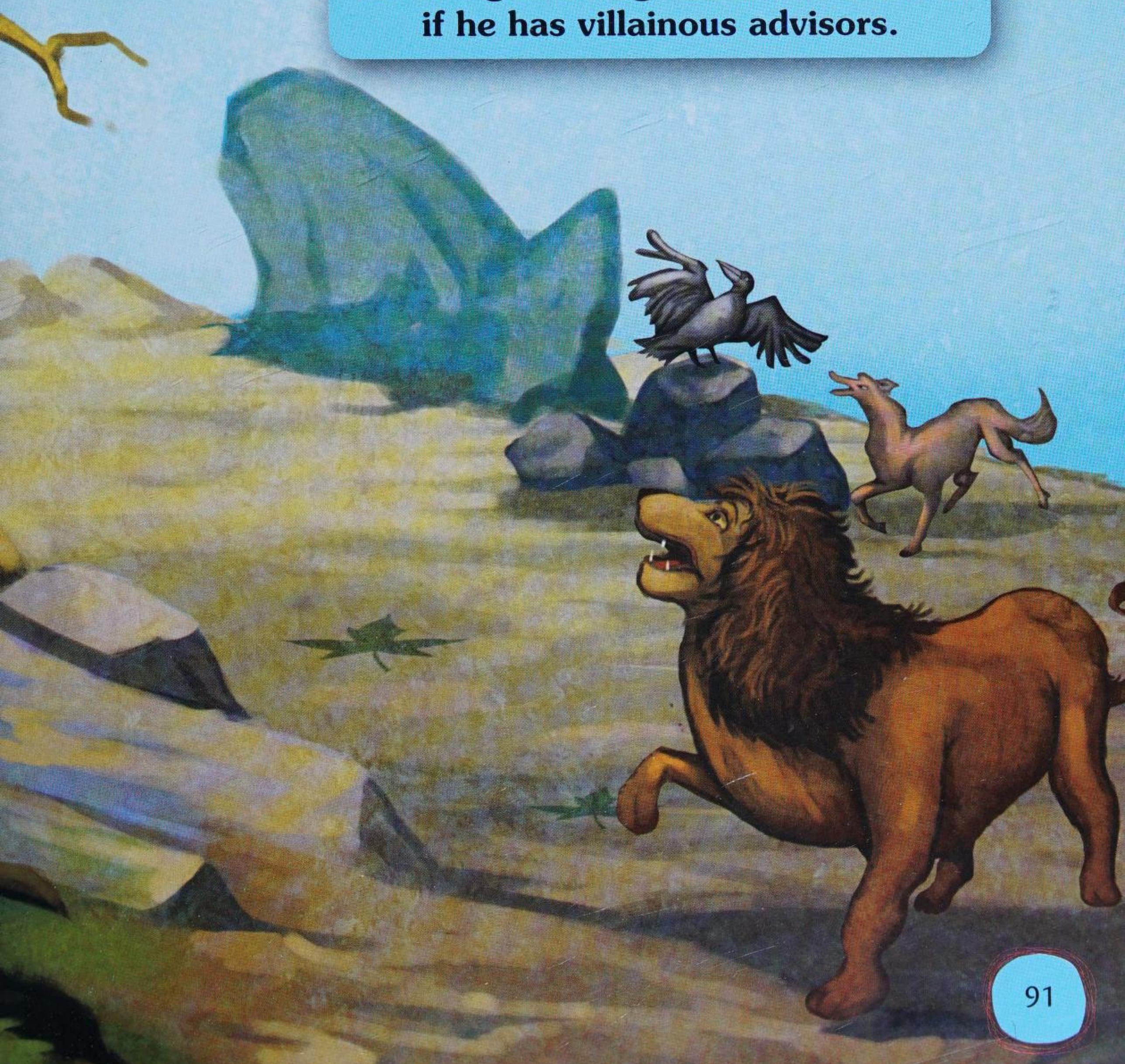
Next day, when Daivachitha saw from a distance the lion coming towards him with his assistants, he thought, "I can't trust him anymore." So he climbed a nearby tree.

The lion came near the carpenter and said, "Friend, Why are you sitting on the tree? Are you afraid of me? I'm your friend. And I have brought two of my friends to meet you."

The carpenter said, "No, no! You've not kept your promise. I'm not afraid of you. But I can't trust your friends."

Moral of the Story

Even a good king cannot be trusted if he has villainous advisors.



23

THE FAKE MONK

Once a king named Suradha ruled Ayodhya. He had a wise minister named Dheerbal. The king sent Dheerbal to punish a rebellious chief. One day, a fake monk came to the city and became famous for his astrological predictions. When the king heard about him, he sent his soldiers to bring the monk to him.

As soon as the fake monk came, the king bowed to him and said, "Stay with me for sometime as my guest, and be my advisor."

The monk was pleased to hear this and stayed with the king.

One day, the monk appeared before the king and said, "O king! I have good news for you. When I met Lord Indra, he enquired about your welfare."

The king was surprised and asked, "How did you meet him?"

The monk said, "I left the earthly body and assuming a heavenly body went to the heaven to meet the Gods who were eager to receive me." The foolish king believed in him and started attending to all the wishes of the monk and neglected his duties.

In the meantime, Dheerbal, who was away from the city for a few months returned. He found that in his absence, the monk had been fooling the king. He thought, "If I have to save the king from the clutches of this fake monk, I must think of some plan."

He went straight to the king and said, "Oh king, I've heard a great lot about the miracles done by this monk." He then told the monk, "Show us your divine powers."

The monk said, "If you want to see my miracles put me in a cell and lock the doors. I'll go to heaven and come back safely."

Dheerbal did as he was directed. He then asked the king, "My Lord, how is it possible for the monk to go to the heaven and come back?"

The king replied, "Dheerbal, don't you know that he will leave this body in his cell and get a heavenly body to go to the heaven."

Dheerbal said, "Then I have an idea. Let us burn his earthly body. Then we can see his heavenly body forever after he returns from there."

The king got excited and said, "Splendid idea, Dheerbal!"

The cell in which the monk was locked was put on fire. This sudden and unexpected action made the monk to run away from the palace.

Then the king realized that he was being fooled by the monk.

Moral of the Story

You should not be carried away by falsities.

24

THE GIRL WHO MARRIED A COBRA

In Rajagraha, there lived a *brahmin* named Deva Sharma. His wife, being childless, felt miserable and worried.

One day, the *brahmin* went to his wife with a fruit and said, "Today I met a sage who gave me this fruit and told me to give it to you. If you eat this fruit, you will have a son in one year."

She ate it. After a year, she gave birth to a cobra. Everyone around her advised her to get rid of the cobra. But being a mother, she was very attached to her son, and decided to bring him up.

Years passed by, and the cobra was fully grown. The *brahmin's* wife told her husband, "It is the time to marry our son. We have to get him a bride." Then the *brahmin* started in search of a bride for his cobra son. He went to his friend's house. The friend said, "I'm so happy to see you after a long time. What brings you here?"

The *brahmin* said, "Dear friend, I'm in search of a bride for my son."

The friend said, "I have a daughter of marriageable age. Will you accept her as your daughter-in-law?"

The *brahmin* was very happy and returned home along with the girl. On seeing her, his wife said, "My son is so blessed! His bride is so beautiful."

When the people of the town came to know about this, they spoke to her kin, "How can anyone noble give in marriage this maiden to a cobra?"

Another said, "The girl has been cheated. The bridegroom is a snake."

Hearing such words, the bride's elderly relatives suggested, "Run away quietly before it's too late!"

But the bride ignored all this saying, "No, no! I will not leave my husband! I will stay with him forever and serve him with all devotion." She married the cobra. Days passed.

One night, when she got up from her sleep she saw a handsome man in front of her. She was shocked and asked, "Who are you?"

The man said, "Dear, don't be frightened. I'm your husband."

She denied, "No, it can't be. My husband is a cobra." He then changed himself into a cobra by getting inside the skin of the snake. She was very happy to see him this way. From that day onwards, every night, the cobra would become a handsome man and in the morning would become a snake again.

The *brahmin* came to know about this and told his wife, "My dear! We must stop our son from entering the body of the cobra."

The *brahmin* couple waited in the night till the cobra changed into the human form. Then they quietly took the cobra's lifeless body and burnt it. Seeing this, the son thanked them as he was relieved of a curse and could now stay as a man forever. Thus the family lived happily ever after.

Moral of the Story

True love pays.

25 THE ROLE OF FATE

Indra, Lord of the immortals, had a wise and intelligent parrot named Sumakamala. The parrot used to entertain all the Gods with his prodigious learning in scientific and sacred texts.

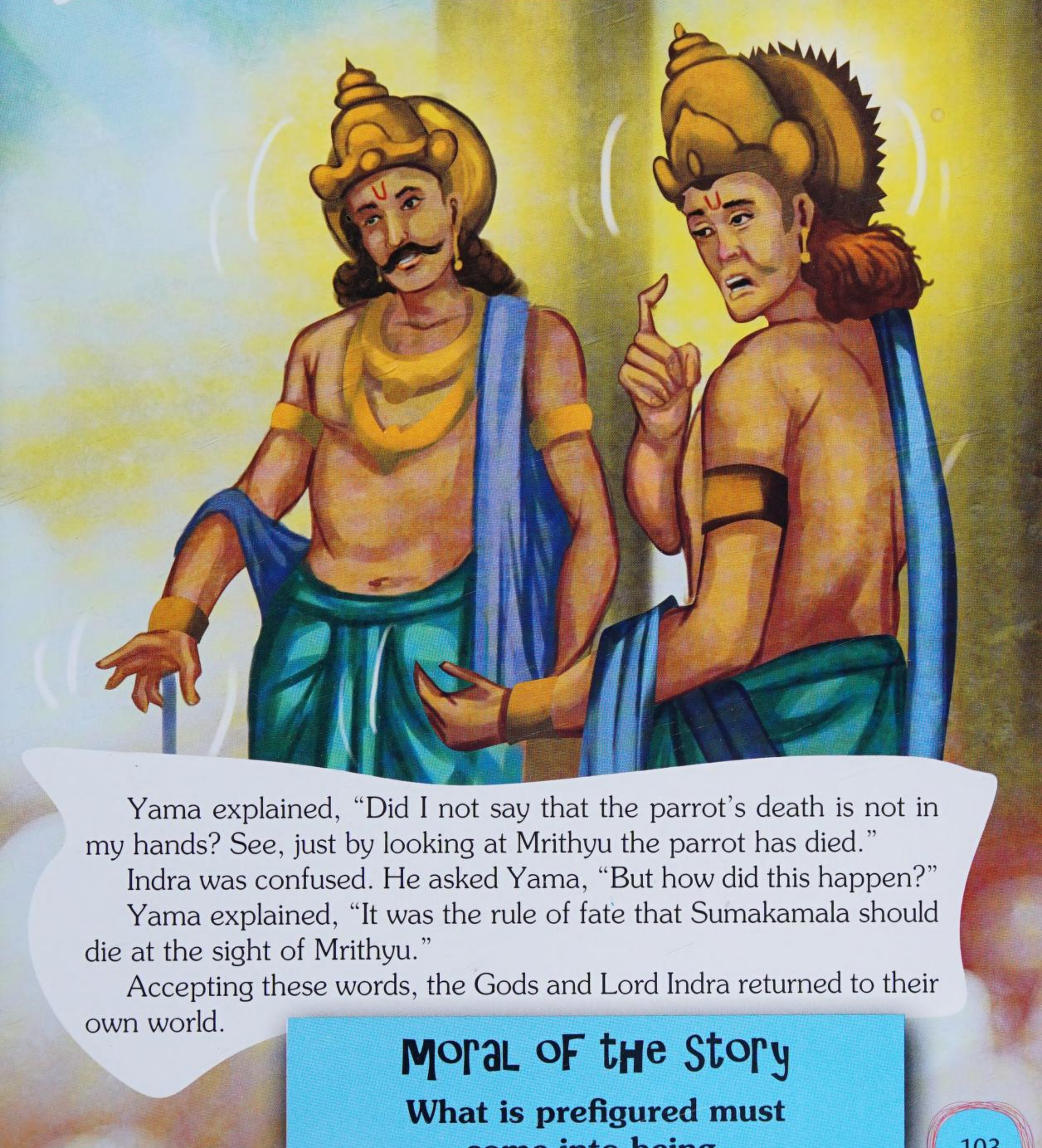
One day, when Lord Indra and his courtiers were listening to the parrot's talk on various vedic verses, the Lord of death, Yama came there. Seeing him, the parrot got frightened and took refuge in the hands of Lord Indra. Lord Indra, however, asked him, "Why do you shudder at the sight of Lord Yama?"

The parrot replied, "I'm afraid of Yama because he always brings death." Hearing the parrot's words, all the Gods decided to end his fear, so requested Lord Yama, "Please promise that you will never ever deprive this parrot of life." But Yama replied, "How can

I promise that? Such matters are under the control of God of time, Kalapurusha." The Gods then went to Kalapurusha and repeated their request.

Thereupon, Kalapurusha replied, "This is a matter of Mrithyu; you better speak to him."

Now, Lord Indra and the Gods along with the parrot went to Mrithyu. The moment the parrot saw Mrithyu, he fell dead. Lord Indra and the Gods were shocked at this. Lord Indra asked Yama, "Yama! What is this? Why and how did this happen? Why should the poor parrot die just at the sight of Mrithyu?"



Yama explained, "Did I not say that the parrot's death is not in my hands? See, just by looking at Mrithyu the parrot has died."

Indra was confused. He asked Yama, "But how did this happen?"

Yama explained, "It was the rule of fate that Sumakamala should die at the sight of Mrithyu."

Accepting these words, the Gods and Lord Indra returned to their own world.

Moral of the Story

What is prefigured must come into being.

26

THE CRANE AND THE MONGOOSE

In a forest, a number of cranes lived on a banyan tree. A cobra also lived inside a hole in the same tree. He regularly ate the crane chicks before they developed wings. One day, a mother crane found out that it was a cobra that had killed all her babies. She felt very sad and

started crying. A crab, which saw the crane crying asked, "Why are you crying? What has happened to you? If you tell me your problem, I can help you."

The mother crane told the crab, "Friend, I have lost all my babies. The cobra that lives in the hole of the tree eats away my babies. I don't know how to destroy this cobra and save my children?"

On hearing this, the crab thought, "These cranes are always our enemies. Why should I help them? This seems to be a good chance to take revenge on them."

Then he said to the crane, "Friend, I have a very good idea. A mongoose lives nearby. Take some pieces of fish and put them all the way from the mongoose's burrow right up to the cobra's hole in this tree. The mongoose will follow the trail and reach the cobra's hole and will kill him."

The crane followed the crab's advise. As expected, the mongoose followed the trail of the fish pieces, reached the hole and killed the cobra. Then he also ate, one by one, all the cranes living on the tree.

Moral of the Story

A problem can be solved only by your friend and not by your enemy.

27

THE ENMITY BETWEEN CROWS AND OWLS

Garuda, the leader of all birds, lived in a forest. One day, all the birds gathered to discuss about their leader. One parrot said, "What is the

good in having Garuda as our king? He is so busy serving his master, Lord Vishnu, that he doesn't help us when we are in trouble."

The other birds agreed, "Yes, you are right. Let us elect a new king."

All the birds decided unanimously, "Let the owl be our king. He is wise and responsible."

But just as the owl was being led to the throne to be crowned, a crow arrived and asked them, "Why have you all gathered here? What is all this festivity about?"

One of the birds replied to the crow, "Friend, we have no king who can look after us when we are in trouble. We've decided to crown this owl as our new king."

Hearing this, the crow cawed loudly and said, "Foolish birds! There are so many beautiful, clever birds among us. Why do you choose this ugly creature, which cannot even see during the daytime, as our king?"

The crow pursued, "This owl is not only ugly but also very cruel. If you make him our king, we will be ruined!"

The birds agreed, "Yes, let us elect some other bird as our leader, some other day."

Then they all flew away to their homes leaving behind the owl. He could not go home, as it was daytime.

One of the followers of the owl said, "My Lord! This crow has prevented your coronation ceremony, and all the birds have gone home."

Irritated at the act of the crow, the owl asked the crow, "Why? You rascal! You have ruined my chance of becoming the king! Henceforth we will be enemies."

Thus crows and owls became enemies forever.

When the owls and other birds had gone, the crow thought to himself, "I have unnecessarily made the owls our enemy. Why did I talk like that and pick up a quarrel with the owl?"

With this thought, the crow too went home.

Moral of the Story

Think before speaking.

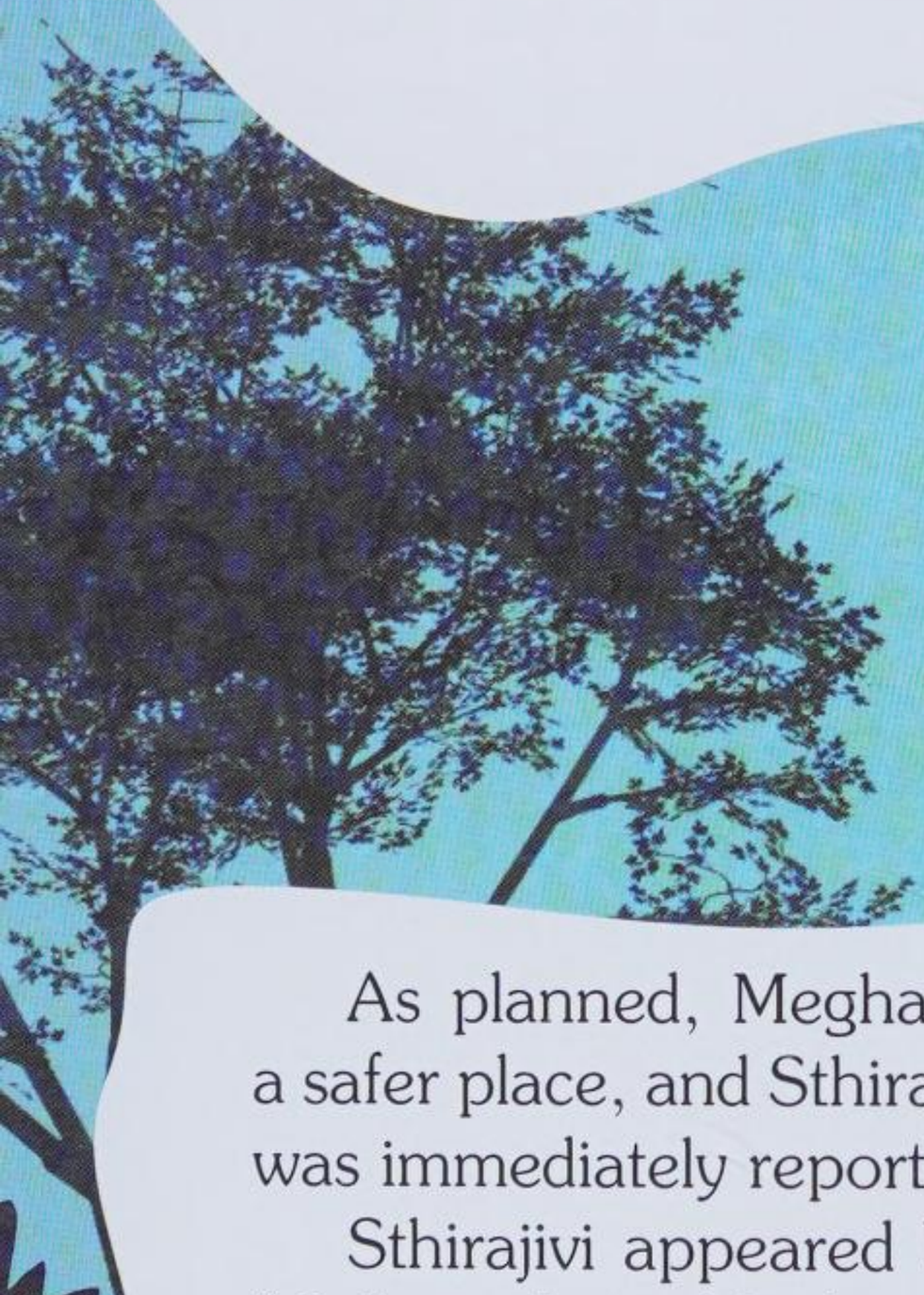
28 THE CROWS OUTWITTED THE OWLS

The king of crows, Meghavarna, lived on a huge banyan tree with hundreds of other crows. Upmada, the king of owls lived with his clan in a fortress in a mountain cave nearby. He was obsessed by the old enmity with the crows, and killed any crow that crossed his path.

Meghavarna's oldest minister Sthirajivi said, "We should try to find the weakness of our enemy and destroy them."

Meghavarna asked, "But what should we do?"

Sthirajivi said, "Smear me with some blood and pretend to drive me out of this place. I will go and forge a friendship with the owls. Also, leave this tree and go to the mountains for some time."



As planned, Meghavarna and all the crows left their home for a safer place, and Sthirajivi was driven out of the kingdom. This news was immediately reported to Upmada by his spies.

Sthirajivi appeared before the owl king and introduced himself, "O king, I am Meghavarna's chief minister, Sthirajivi. I have been exiled from the kingdom, as I praised you before my king. Now I wish to serve you by leading your Majesty to Meghavarna's whereabouts and helping to destroy all the crows!"

The owl king's minister Raktaksha objected by saying, "Sir, please do not believe him... Let us kill him at once." But the other ministers did not agree with him. A senior owl said, "I feel that this crow will help us in overpowering our enemy."

The owl king was convinced by the arguments of the majority of his ministers and did not kill Sthirajivi.

Sthirajivi then requested the owl king to allow him to collect wood and said, "O mighty king, I wish to burn myself to death, so that I can

be reborn as an owl and take revenge on Meghavarna!"

Raktaksha again objected to this as he knew that Sthirajivi was fooling them and had indeed come to destroy their clan. But the other owls did not listen to him. Finally, Raktaksha, with his few trusted followers, left the owl king.

After collecting a huge pile of wood, Sthirajivi went to his king Meghavarna and said, "Take a few lighted torches to the entrance of the cave during the daytime and throw it on a pile of wood that is lying just behind it."

All the crows did as instructed and within moments, the owls were trapped and perished in the fire. Meghavarna and his followers returned to their old home on the banyan tree and lived happily.

Moral of the Story

You can defeat your enemy by using wisdom.

29

THE WISE RABBIT

The king of elephants, named Chaturdanta, ruled over a beautiful green forest that received plentiful rains. However, once there was a dry spell, and no rain fell for twelve years. All the lakes and ponds dried up completely. Troubled by this, all the elephants spoke to their king, "We are at the point of death due to thirst; we must find a lake with water soon."

The king told them, "I know of a lake that is always full of water. Let us go and start living near it." So, the elephants travelled for five days and reached the lake. They colonized the place and started living happily.

Around the lake, thousands of rabbits also lived in their burrows. Whenever the elephants dived into the water, many rabbits got trampled underneath their weight. The surviving rabbits gathered and expressed their grief to their king, "Dear king, these elephants will come here daily. So we should find a way to save ourselves." They decided to meet the elephant king.

The king of rabbits, Vijayadatta, went to the elephant king and said, "O king, the moon has sent me to tell you that, you have violated the sanctity of the moon lake. He is very angry with you for hurting the rabbits."

The elephant king said, "Friend, all this is true. I have offended the Lord moon and I will not do it again. Please show me the way so that I can ask forgiveness from Lord Moon."

Vijayadatta said, "Come with me, so that I can reveal the God to you."

Then he led the elephant king to the lake and showed him the moon's reflection in the water of the lake.

The elephant king promised him that his followers would never come to this lake again. Then he left the place followed by his herd. After that the rabbits lived happily forever.

Moral of the Story

Always choose a wise person as your leader.

30 THE CUNNING MEDIATOR

Once a crow lived on a tree. A partridge named Kapinjala also lived in the hole of the same tree. They both were good friends. One day, the partridge went to a place full of ripe rice. But he did not return home, the crow was worried. Days passed, then one day, a hare named Sighragha occupied the hollow of the tree.

Few days later, the grown up partridge returned to his old home. When she saw the hare occupying her home, she flew in rage and shouted, "You thief! How dare you occupy my home?"

The hare replied, "It was vacant and so I occupied it. So this place is not yours anymore."

The partridge said, "Let us go and ask somebody."

The hare agreed and both of them went in search of an expert. Hearing this, a wicked cat named Dadhikarna disguised itself as a saint and came their way. The partridge saw the cat and told the hare, "He is Dadhikarna, the wisest of the wise."

But the hare said, "He is a rogue, disguised as a saint. He is enemy of the rabbits. I will not go to him."

Seeing them, the cat said aloud, "Alas! Alas! Love and kindness are only true. Everything else is false."

The partridge told the hare, "He seems to be a pious and righteous being. Let us go to him."

Again the hare stopped the partridge and said, "No, he is a devil quoting the scriptures. We must keep a distance while talking."

Then he addressed the cat, "Please mediate in our dispute. Whoever found guilty shall be eaten by you."

The cat said, "You are mistaken. I am no more a devil. I will hear your dispute and tell you who is right and who is wrong. But I have grown old, so please come near me and tell me."

Believing his words, the partridge and the hare went near him, and he seized both of them.

Moral of the Story

Never trust a wicked person.

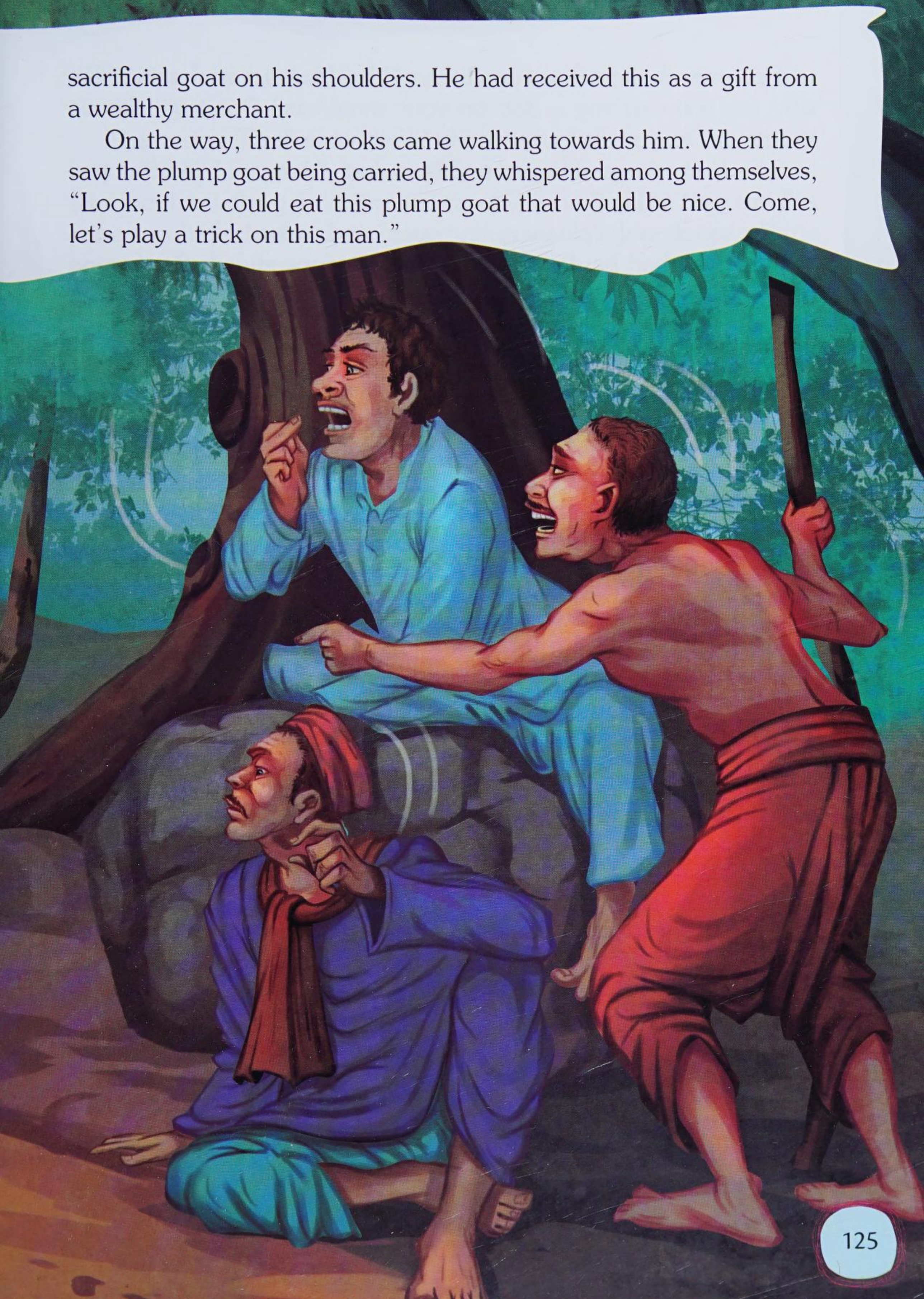
31

THE BRAHMIN AND THE CROOKS

A *brahmin* named Mitra Sharma lived on the alms given to him by others. One day, he was returning to his village, carrying a plump

sacrificial goat on his shoulders. He had received this as a gift from a wealthy merchant.

On the way, three crooks came walking towards him. When they saw the plump goat being carried, they whispered among themselves, "Look, if we could eat this plump goat that would be nice. Come, let's play a trick on this man."



So, one of them went in front of the *brahmin* and said, "Sir, why are you carrying a dog on your shoulders? Don't you know, as a *brahmin*, you are not supposed to touch a dog?"

The *brahmin* was irritated and burst out, "Are you blind that you call this goat a dog?"

The crook said, "please go in peace" and walked off.

When he had hardly walked a little distance ahead, the second crook came to him and exclaimed, "Oh! Your holiness, carrying a dead calf on your shoulders?"

Now he got angry and said, "Are you blind to call this goat a calf?"

The crook said, "Oh! Please do not be angry. I spoke through ignorance. Do as you please."

As the *brahmin* walked a little further, the third crook came and said, "Oh! What an unholy thing you are doing? You are carrying

a donkey on your shoulders. Drop this animal at once, before anyone else sees you."

These situations made the *brahmin* to conclude that the animal was an evil spirit which looked different to different people. Out of fear, he threw the goat down and ran to his home. The three crooks were too happy with their catch and immediately pounced on the animal. They enjoyed their meal.

Moral of the Story

Man with common sense can subdue stronger enemies.

32 THE BRAHMIN AND THE COBRA

Once a farmer named Haridatta lived in a small village. The piece of land he cultivated gave him very little to survive. One day, when he was taking a nap under a tree in his field, he saw a huge cobra in the nearby anthill.

The farmer thought, "This cobra must be the God of this land. I have never made any offerings to him till now. This may be the reason for me not getting anything out of this land. I should pay my respect to it and offer worship." So, he brought a bowl of milk and

addressed the cobra, "Oh Lord! Forgive me for not honouring you, please accept this offering."

Leaving the bowl of milk at the anthill, he returned home. Next morning, he was surprised to see a gold coin in the bowl. From then onwards he left a bowl of milk everyday and was rewarded with a gold coin.

One day, he had to go to the neighbouring town. He called his son and said, "Place a bowl of milk near the anthill till I come."

His son did as he was advised, and was surprised to find a gold coin in the empty bowl. He thought, "This anthill must be full of gold coins. So, why not kill the cobra and take all the coins."

With this intention, the next day he brought a bowl of milk and kept it near the anthill. He then hid himself behind a tree with a stick in his hand. When the cobra came out to drink milk, he gave a hefty blow on the cobra but missed the aim. Luckily the cobra was saved. It then sprang at the boy in an instant, stinging him to death.

Next day, the farmer returned and learned about the fate of his son. He mourned deeply for his son but rushed to the cobra with a bowl of milk. Without coming out of the hole, the cobra told the farmer, "You have become greedy Haridatta. Even after losing your son you have come here to seek gold. Even your son was greedy and he tried to kill me. Do not come here again. Take this diamond as my last gift." The sad farmer could not win the faith of cobra and returned to his home.

Moral of the Story

Trust once betrayed cannot be regained.

33

THE MONSTER AND THE BRAHMIN

Once a poor *brahmin* named Drona lived in a small town. He survived only on alms. One day a kind person donated him two calves. Drona looked after the calves with all care and love, so the calves grew fine and healthy. A thief named Kroorakarma decided to steal them. So he went to the *brahmin's* house one night. On the way, he saw a scary creature with long teeth, sharp nails, arched nose and blood-red eyes.

The frightened thief asked the creature, "Who are you?"

He replied, "I am Satyavachana, a monster. No one speaks lies to me. Let me know who you are, and where you are going?"

The thief replied, "I am a thief. I am going to steal the calves of the *brahmin*."

Satyavachana told him, "Really! I have not eaten for many days. So today I will eat the *brahmin*."

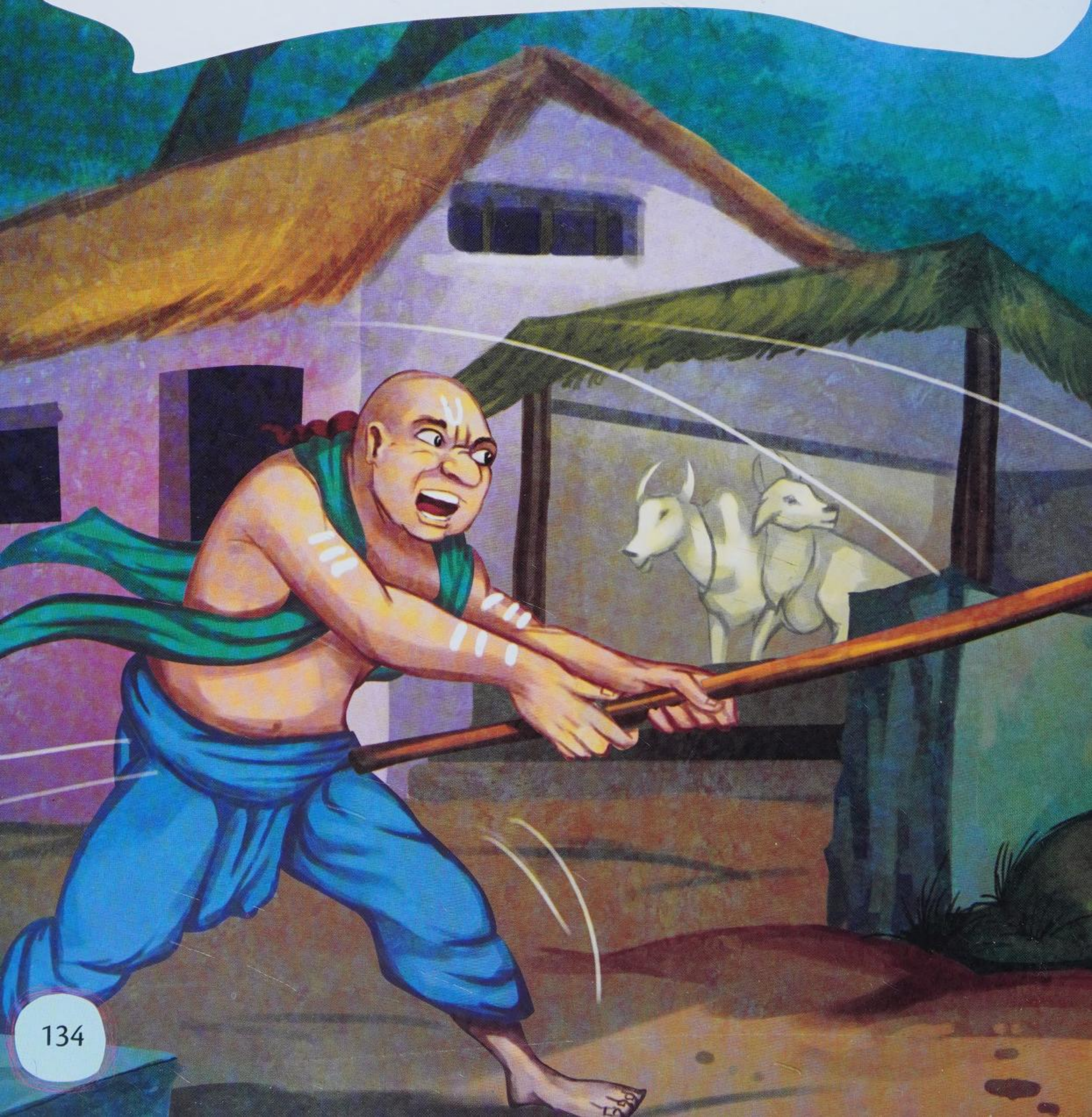
Both of them went to the *brahmin's* house that night. When they were sure that the *brahmin* had slept, the monster stepped in to kill the poor *brahmin*. The thief held him back saying, "No, that's not right. You cannot eat him until I steal his calves."

Satyavachana said, "If you take away the calves first, they may make some noise and the *brahmin* will wake up. Then I cannot eat him."

But the thief stuck to his point saying, "No, if you attack him first, he will wake up and I cannot steal the calves."

Both of them kept arguing loudly. Hearing the noise the *brahmin* woke up and asked, "Brothers! Who are you? What confusion is going on here?"

The thief told him, "This monster wants to kill you." The monster interfered, "This man is a thief, who has come to steal your calves."



After listening to them, the *brahmin* became alert and started chanting his prayers. By meditating on his chosen deity, he saved himself from the monster's dreadful desire. He then took a stick and ran towards the monster and the thief to drive them away.

Moral of the Story

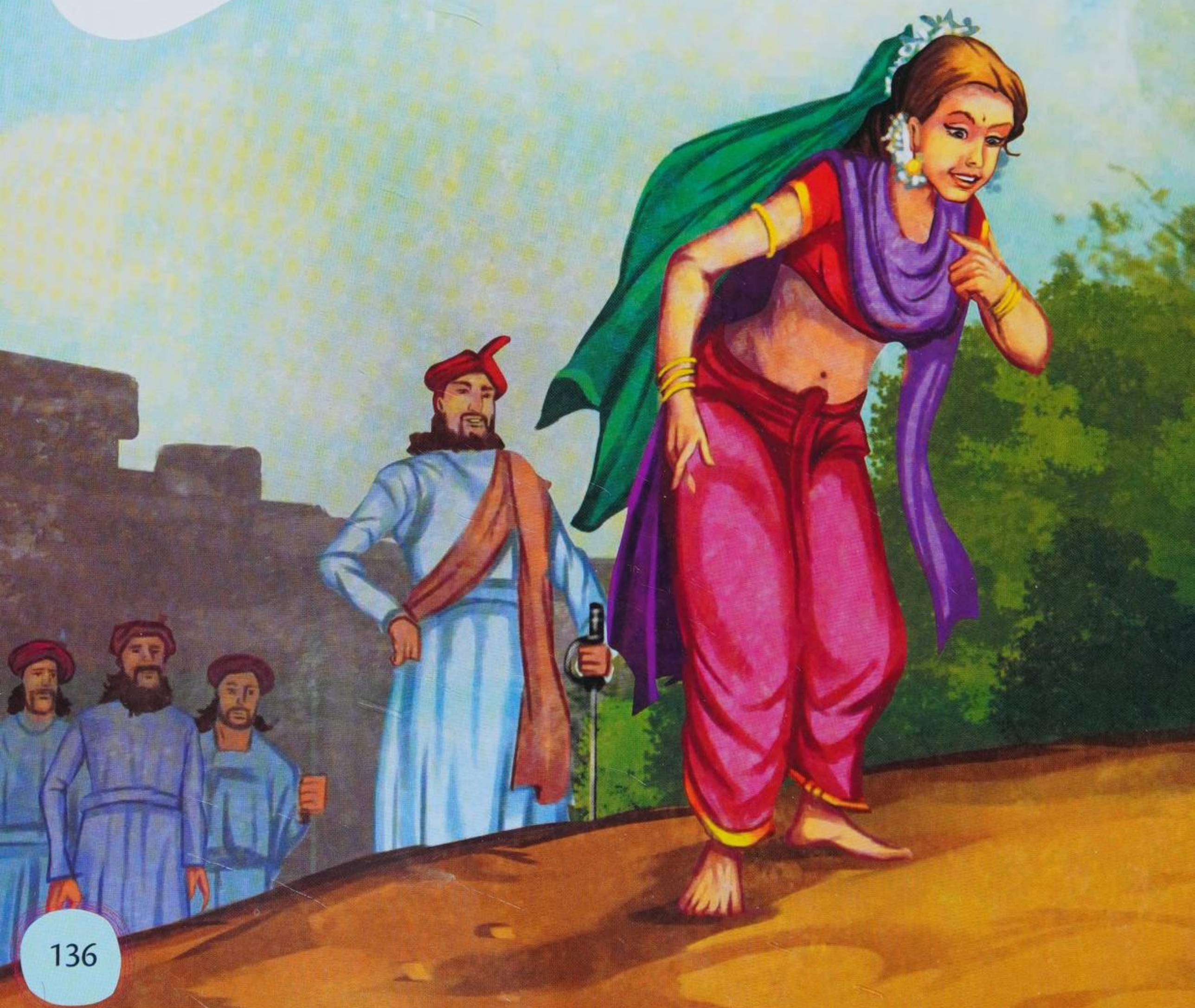
When rivals fight, it is an advantage for their common enemy.

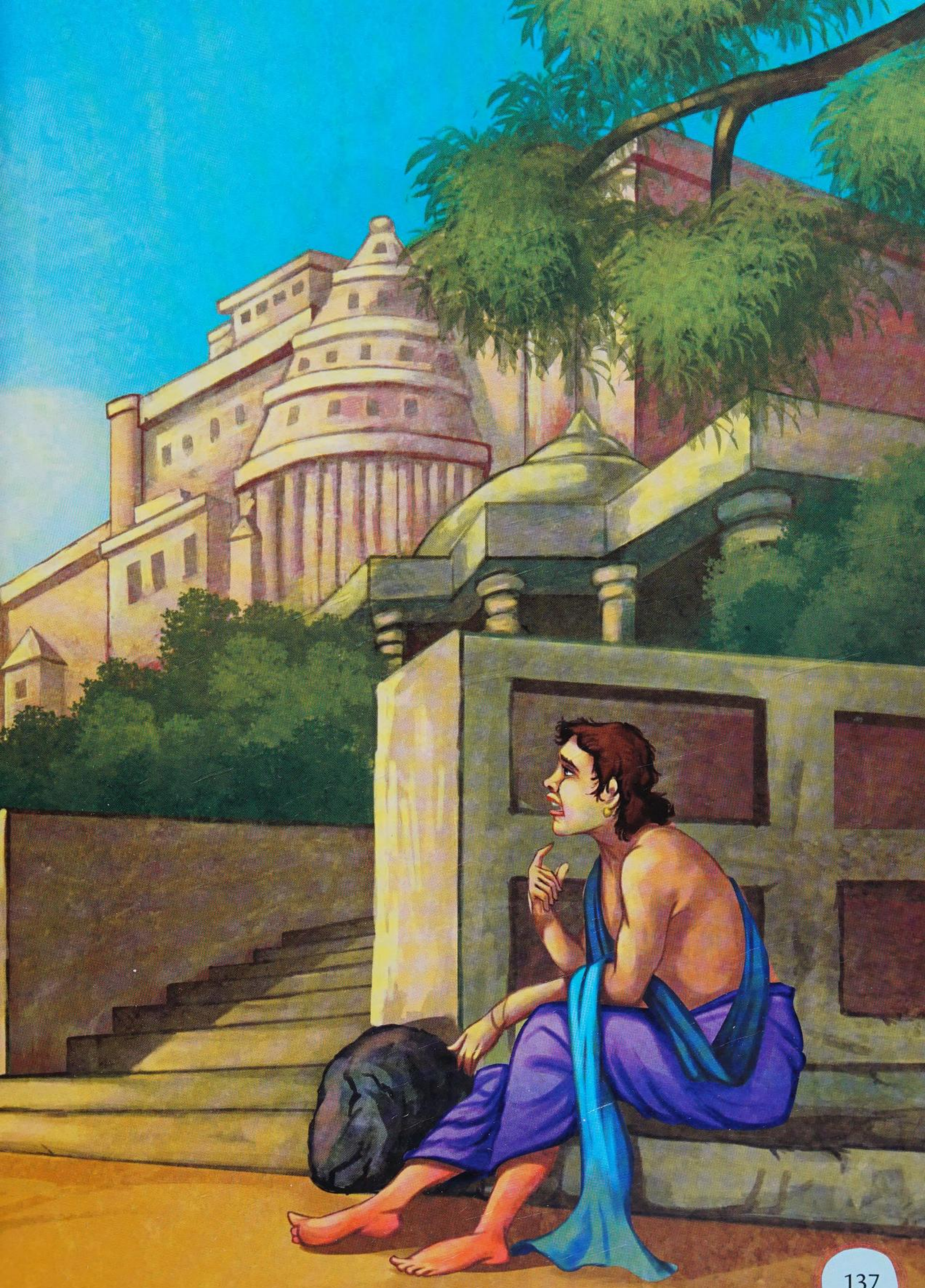
34

THE PRINCE WHO HAD A SNAKE IN HIS STOMACH

Once a king named Devasakti ruled a city. His only son was very sick because he had a snake in his stomach. The dejected prince decided to leave the city. On his way, he took shelter in a temple and lived by begging for alms.

King Bali, the ruler of that town had two daughters. The elder daughter, whenever she met her father greeted him with, "May his majesty be ever victorious," while the younger daughter said, "Let God bestow on you whatever you deserve." This greeting angered the king so much that he summoned his ministers one day and said, "Teach this girl a lesson. Marry her off to a stranger and let her enjoy what she gets."





Obeying his orders, the ministers took the princess away and married her to Devasakti's son who lived in a temple. She joyously accepted the ailing prince as her husband.

Days passed. One morning, the princess went to the lake to take bath. When she returned, she was surprised to see the prince fast asleep with his head resting against an anthill. The serpent in his stomach had come out to breathe fresh air. At this moment, another snake which had come out of the anthill glared at this snake. Soon an argument started between them.

The snake from the anthill accused the snake from the prince's stomach, "How dare you make the prince's stomach your home! You are tormenting this handsome prince!"

The snake from the prince's stomach replied, "You mean creature! I know you are polluting the two golden pots filled with treasures hidden in your hole."

The anthill inmate now said, "If the poor prince knew that he could kill you by drinking mustard water, he would not have to suffer like this!"

The snake from the prince's stomach retorted, "If anyone knew that by pouring a pot full of boiling water into the anthill you can be destroyed, they would be rich by now." He then went back into the prince's stomach.

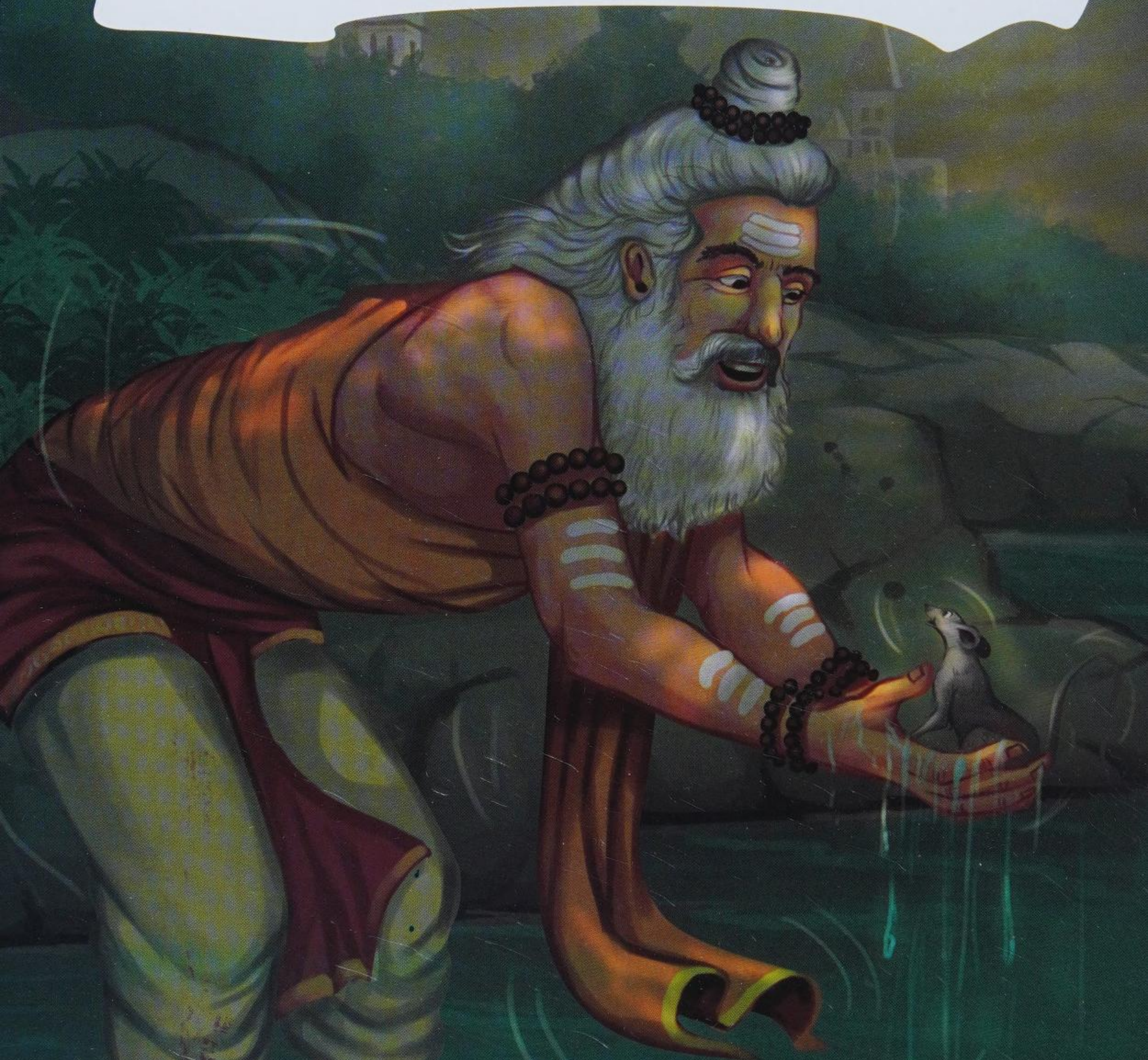
The princess, who was listening to their arguments immediately, gave her husband some mustard water to drink and poured hot water into the anthill, killing both the snakes at once. She then took the treasure from the anthill, returned with the prince to his kingdom and lived happily ever after.

Moral of the Story

Lack of co-operation between people of same community results in their ruin.

35 THE WEDDING OF THE MOUSE

Once a great sage named Yagnavalkya lived in a hermitage on the banks of river Ganga. One day, as he was performing his daily rites in the river, a tiny baby mouse fell right into his hollowed palm from the beak of a hawk. Taking pity on her, by his ascetic powers, the sage



changed the mouse into a beautiful girl and took her with him to his hermitage where he lived with his wife. He told his wife, "Take this little child and bring her up as our daughter with tender care."

His wife was pleased on seeing her and brought her up with love. When she grew up, the sage's wife told him, "My lord! It is time we marry her to a man who is worthy of her in all respects."

The sage replied, "Yes, why not?" Then he invoked the Sun God who appeared before him and enquired, "Why have I been summoned?"

The sage said, "O Sun God, I am looking for a suitable bridegroom for my daughter. Please marry her." He then asked his daughter, "Does this suitor, who is so splendid, and lights up the entire world please you?"

But she denied saying, "No, I can not bear to look at him since he is so bright."

The sage then asked the Sun God, "O blessed one, can you suggest a bridegroom superior than you?" The Sun God said, "Yes, the Cloud is superior to me, my glory fades when he covers me."

The sage then summoned the Cloud and asked his daughter, "My child, will you accept the Cloud as your husband?"

The daughter said, "No father, he is dark."

The sage then asked the Cloud, "Sir, suggest someone who is more powerful than you?" The Cloud said, "The Wind is more powerful than me."

But the daughter denied his alliance saying, "No, he is fickle and unsteady."

Then the sage asked the Wind, "O Wind, tell me who is superior to you?" The Wind replied, "Sir, it is the Mountain."

The sage invited the Mountain and asked his daughter, "My dear, do you like him?" But she rejected him too, saying, "Father, he is rugged and tough."

The sage now asked the Mountain, "O mighty Mountain, tell me who is mightier than you?" He replied, "Sir, the mouse is mightier than me. He can borrow a hole in me to make his home."

Finally, the sage invited the king of the mice to marry his daughter. She was very happy and said, "O father, turn me into a mouse and let me marry the mouse king, so that I can follow the ways of my people." The sage changed her into a mouse again and married her to the mouse king.

Moral of the Story

That which we are, we are.

36 THE GOLDEN DROPPINGS

Once a bird named Sindhuka lived on a big tree near a mountain. His droppings turned into gold pieces as soon as they fell on the ground.

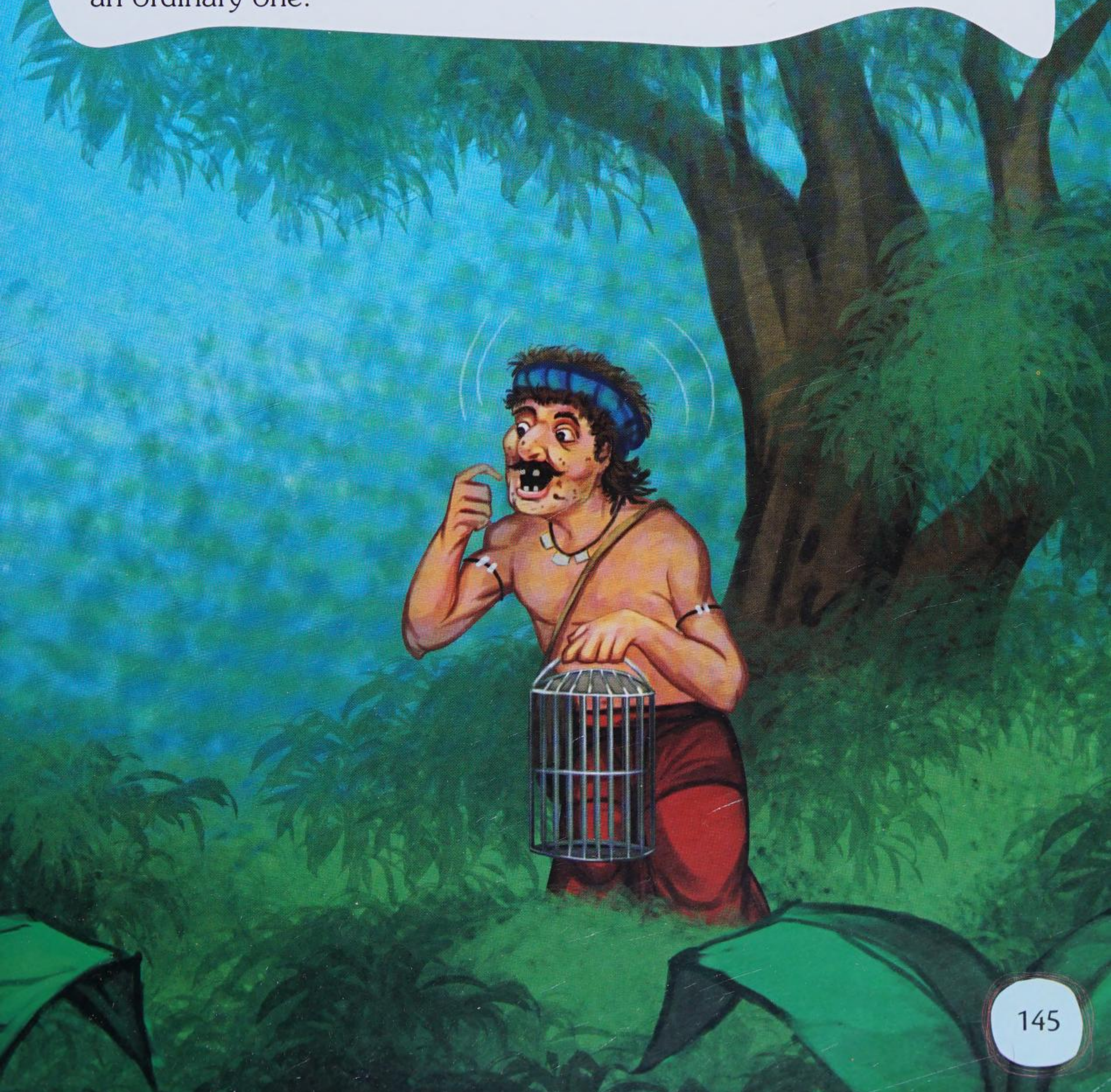
One day, a hunter roaming in the forest saw this miracle. He was surprised and thought, "Oh! I cannot believe my eyes! Are they really gold pieces? Then in that case, I can make a great fortune with this bird." He set a trap in the tree.

Soon, the hunter caught the bird and caged him. But then he thought, "Hmmm, if I have the bird with me, I may be in trouble. Instead, if I offer it as a gift to the king, I may get a reward in return."

Next day, the hunter went to the king's palace and met him and said, "O great king, please accept this as my humble gift – the bird whose droppings turn into gold pieces." The king was happy to receive this rare gift. He was surprised and said, "Ah! Really! It's a miracle."

He called his minister and said, "Take this bird and keep it in a safe place. Also give this hunter a big reward in return for this rare creature!"

The minister whispered into the king's ears, "My lord! Don't believe his words. He seems to be a big cheat. The bird seems to be an ordinary one."



Listening to the minister's words, the king too had a doubt about the truthfulness of the hunter. He took the cage from the hunter and released the bird. The bird laid a dropping and flew away. To everyone's surprise, the dropping turned into gold!

Moral of the Story

Don't be misled by foolish counselors.

37

THE GOLDEN SWANS

Long ago, there lived a king named Chitraratha. In his garden there was a beautiful lake full of lotuses and golden swans. Once in every six months, each swan paid tribute to the king with a golden feather.

One day, a great bird came to the lake. The swans asked him, "Look here, you seem to be new to this place. Why have you come here?" The bird replied, "Now, this is going to be my place. I am going to live with you."

The swans got irritated and said, "No, you cannot live here. We live in this lake by right of giving the king a gift of one golden feather every six months."

Not contented with this reply, the large bird went to the king and said, "Oh mighty king! Those swans in your lake are very arrogant. They say I cannot live with them. They even said that even if you

recommend, they will not let me live in the lake."

The king got angry and summoned his attendants and said, "Fellows! Go and kill all the swans at once."

Receiving the king's order, the attendants left at once towards the lake. Seeing the king's men coming with swords in their hands, the king swan said, "Hey friends! This is not at all a pleasant prospect. So, let us leave this lake?" So saying, the golden swans left the place.

Moral of the Story

Be generous and hospitable to everyone.

38 THE DOVE'S SACRIFICE

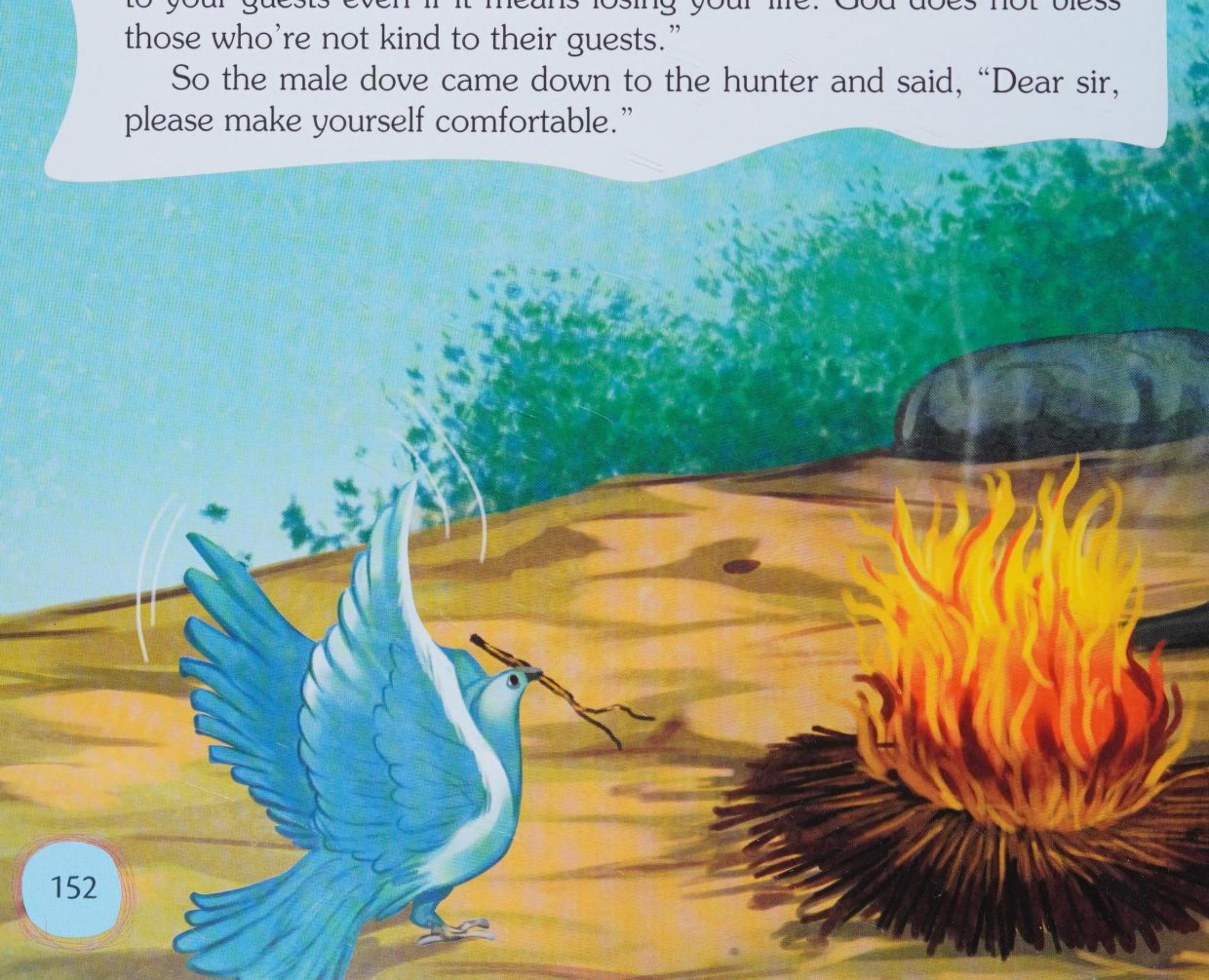
Palidaman was a cruel hunter who lived on the outskirts of Vijayanagara. One day he was returning from the forest with a cage in which he had the catch of the day. Suddenly, it started raining heavily, so he went and stood under a big tree.

On the tree lived a pair of doves. At that time, the female dove had not returned home. The male dove was worried for her.

The male dove waited for a long time. Then he was so saddened at his helplessness of not being able to locate her that he lamented for the loss of his wife. He cried, "Oh, what has happened to my wife? This home is empty without her."

Incidentally, the female dove was inside the hunter's cage right under the tree. Hearing the male dove's cry, the female dove consoled him, "My dear! I am here, right under the tree. Listen, be hospitable to your guests even if it means losing your life. God does not bless those who're not kind to their guests."

So the male dove came down to the hunter and said, "Dear sir, please make yourself comfortable."



The hunter replied, "I am shivering in this terrible cold. Do something to relieve me from this."

The male dove brought some wood and made a fire. Then the male dove asked him, "Sir, you must be feeling hungry. How can I satisfy your hunger? I have nothing to offer, except myself."Saying this, the male dove jumped into the fire. The hunter was shocked to see this magnanimous action of the dove. He was overwhelmed by the dove's sacrifice and thought, "O what a noble creature! The dove has achieved the purpose of its life. What am I doing? Nothing but killing innocent animals. No hereafter I will not do this sin."

The hunter threw away the nets, opened the cage and let out the female dove. The female dove mourned for her husband's death. Then she too jumped into the fire.

Moral of the Story

Honour the guest,
even if it costs your life.

39 THE TALKING CAVE

Once upon a time a lion named Kharanakara lived in a deep rain forest. One day he could not find any prey in the forest. He roamed here and there looking for food. Some way ahead he located a big cave and thought, "I am hungry and tired. This cave looks like a nice resting place. I am sure some animal will come here during the night for shelter when I will be able to make the kill. So, let me take some rest here."

Soon, the owner of the cave, a jackal named Dadhiputcha came and stood at the entrance of the cave. As he was about to enter inside, he noticed footprints of the lion going into the cave but not coming out. He concluded that the lion must still be inside. So, he decided to find out for sure whether there was a lion inside the cave or not.

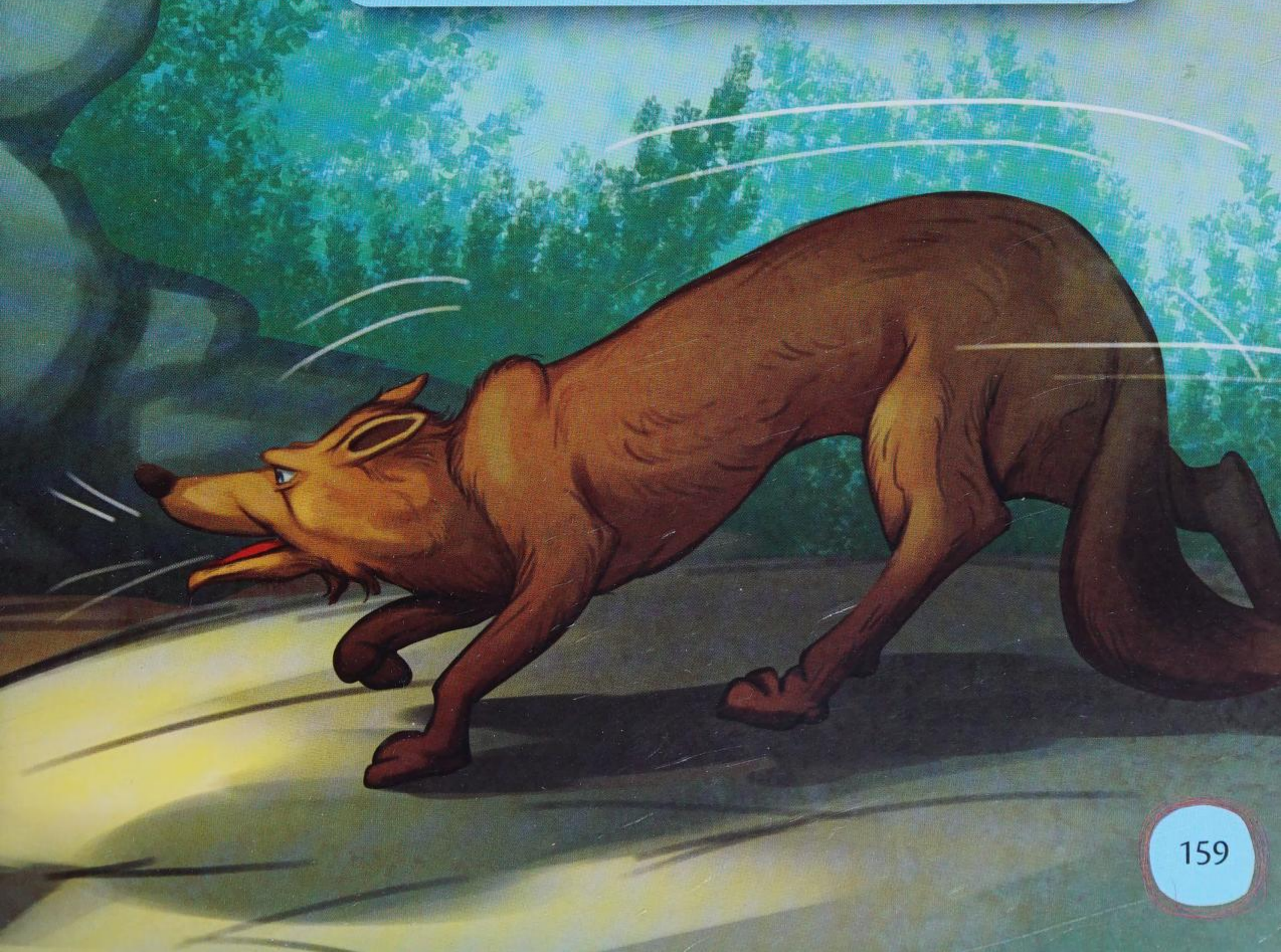
He called out thrice, "Cave! Oh cave! Oh cave! Your friend has come to meet you. How are you?" There was no reply from the cave. So, the jackal once again called thrice, saying, "Why are you silent? We had decided to exchange greetings with each other. And today you do not return my greetings. Well, alright then; I shall leave and go to that other cave, which, I am sure, will respond to my greetings."

Hearing these words, the lion thought, "I see! There seems to be an arrangement between the cave and this animal. My presence here keeps the cave silent. So I have to pretend as if the cave is speaking and greet the animal. This way I can get him into my trap." So, he roared out tremendously.

Hearing the roar, the jackal came to know that there was indeed a lion inside the cave and so he hurriedly left the place.

Moral of the Story

He who anticipates a danger and acts to avert it, does not come to grief.



40 FROGS THAT RODE A SNAKE

In a forest on the Varuna hill, there lived a black snake named Mandavishya. As he was becoming old it was increasingly difficult for him to catch prey. Hence he thought of a plan to get easy daily meals. He went to a lake inhabited by large number of frogs. He rested on its edge and pretended as if he had lost all interest in worldly matters.

A frog asked him, "Uncle, Why are you dull today?"

The snake replied, "I am sad and miserable because a *brahmin* has cursed me."

The frog asked him, "Why did the *brahmin* curse you?"

The snake explained, "Last night, when I was out looking for food I saw a frog. I tried to catch him by leaping at him. But by mistake, I bit a *brahmin* boy, who died immediately. When the boy's father came to know that I killed his son, he cursed me that I will have to carry frogs on my back and I will always be at their mercy. So, I have come here to carry you wherever you want to go."

The silly frog immediately carried this news to all the other frogs. They got excited and approached the frog king, Jalapada and told him about the offer. The king was very happy and said, "Wonderful! Let us all go and have a joy-ride on the back of the snake."

The frog king trooped out of the lake with his ministers and friends. Seeing him, the snake said, "Welcome! O noble king! I am here to serve you and your subjects."

Soon the frog king leaped on to the hood of the snake, followed by his ministers. All the frogs enjoyed the joy-ride sitting on the back of the snake.

The next day, the snake crawled very slowly, so the frog king asked, "O snake! What is the matter with you?" The snake replied, "O King, I am hopelessly weak, because I have not eaten for the last two days."

The frog king casually said, "Why don't you eat a few younger frogs?"

The snake disagreed and said, "No, no, I cannot do that! I have the curse of the *brahmin* hanging over my head. But since you insist for me to eat a few frogs, I am simply delighted."

In this way, the snake started eating frogs and he continued to do so without interruption. Soon he became strong and healthy.

Then one day, another big snake came that way. Seeing Mandavishya carrying frogs on his back, he remarked, "Friend, it is ridiculous and disgraceful for you to carry frogs, which are our prey."

Mandavishya said, "Friend, I am carrying them, only to gain their trust. At the right moment, I will attack them and devour them all."

The frog king overheard this conversation and asked Mandavishya if what he had heard was true. Mandavishya attempting to mask his real purpose told the frog king, "Oh! Nothing of the sort my friend."

The frog king once again foolishly believed the words of the snake and the snake slowly swallowed all the frogs.

Moral of the Story

Don't be a fool to trust your enemy.

41

THE THREE SAGES

Once upon a time there lived three brothers - Ekata, Dwita and Trita. They were sages and went daily to a river bank for doing their penance. Everyday, they also washed their clothes and dried them in the sky with clips, with fear that the clothes would fell down and get soiled.

One day, a kite was carrying a female frog in its claws. Ekata who was trying to dry his clothes in the sky saw this and shouted at the kite, "Leave it, leave it."

Since he did not notice what his hands were doing, his clothes dropped from his hands and got soiled.

When Dwita saw this, he shouted at the kite too, "Don't hold it, Don't hold it" and soon his clothes also fell down.

When Trita saw that the clothes of his elder brothers had fallen down, he thought it would be better not to say anything and remained silent.

Moral of the Story

It is sometimes better not to notice the happenings around.

42

THE RAT THAT SAVED HIS FRIENDS

A crow named Laghupatanaka lived on a banyan tree near the city of Mahilaropyam. One day, when he was flying in search of food, he saw a hunter coming towards the banyan tree carrying a net. Soon the hunter spread his net under the tree and scattered some seeds.

At this moment, Chitragriva, the king of doves, surrounded by hundreds of doves saw the seeds from far away.

The greedy doves reached the tree in no time to eat the grains. The hunter, who was hiding behind the tree, pulled the net over them and they all were trapped.

The king of doves was wise and he advised other doves, "Friends, don't be frightened! We should all fly together taking the net along with us. We will fly to a safe place where the hunter cannot follow us. Get ready! One...two...three...!" All birds flew at the same time

taking the net along. They were followed by the hunter. But after a long chase the hunter lost sight of the birds and gave up his search.

When Chitragriva did not see the hunter following them, he told the doves, "Let us all fly to Mahilaropyam, where my friend Hiranyaka, the rat lives. He will help us to get out of this net."

Reaching there, Chitragriva shouted, "Hiranyaka! Please come out. I am your friend Chitragriva. We are in trouble. Help us."

Hiranyaka came out and was happy to see his friend and said, "Alright, I will help you to get out first as you are the king and then help other birds."

But Chitragriva disagreed, "Please, free my friends first. It is the duty of the king to look after his people."

Pleased with his friend's love for his people Hiranyaka said, "Friend, I know the duties of a king. I will free everyone now." Hiranyaka with the help of other rats bit off the entire net and freed all the doves. Chitragriva thanked his friend and flew away safely with his flock.

Moral of the Story

A friend in need is a friend indeed.

43 THE CROW-RAT DISCOURSE

A crow named Laghupatanaka lived on a banyan tree. He admired the friendship between a dove and a rat who lived nearby, and thought, "I too will make friendship with this noble rat." The rat was called Hiranyaka.

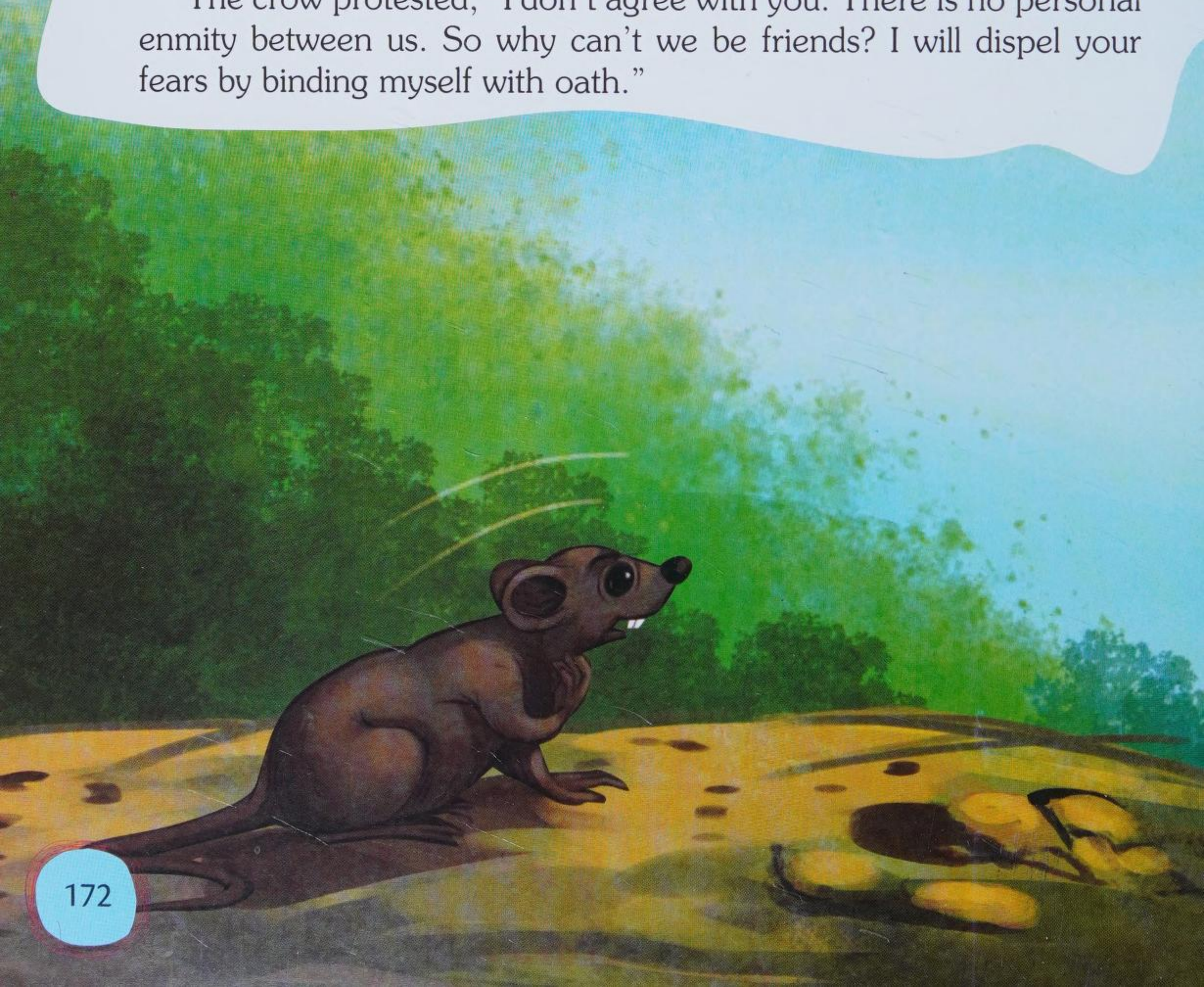
So, the crow went to Hiranyaka's house and called out, "Sir Hiranyaka, please come out."

The rat enquired, "Who are you?"

The crow replied, "I am Laghupatanaka, having witnessed the great friendship between you and Chitragriva, the dove, I am most pleased. I feel great confidence in you, and your friendship will be useful for me too. So, I have come here seeking your friendship."

The rat retorted, "Sir, you are the eater; I am the food. What kind of friendship can exist between us? I can't have friendship with you."

The crow protested, "I don't agree with you. There is no personal enmity between us. So why can't we be friends? I will dispel your fears by binding myself with oath."



The rat replied, "I have no confidence in your oaths?"

The crow said, "Grant me your friendship; otherwise I will give up my life right here."

Hearing this plea, the rat said, "Alright! You have gained my trust. From now on, we are friends."

Thus the rat and the crow became friends and lived together and helped each other. Days passed in this manner.

One day, the crow told the rat, "My friend, I am not happy here. I have decided to leave this place."

The rat was surprised to hear this and asked, "Why?"

The crow said, "This country is famine-struck and hungry people are setting traps for birds every day. So I have decided to go to the forest, where there is a lake, there my friend Manthara, a turtle lives."

The rat said, "Friend, I too will come with you to your friend's place."

The crow asked him, "But how? You can't fly."

The rat suggested, "You can carry me on your back." Soon they started their journey and reached the lake where the turtle lived.

The turtle was shocked at first to see an odd creature coming towards him and so he hid himself.

On reaching the land, the crow kept his friend down and then called, "Manthara, Where are you? I am your friend Laghupatanaka."

Hearing the crow's voice, the turtle came out of the lake and said, "Here I am."

The two friends spent some happy moments and then the crow told about his friend Hiranyaka. Then the turtle went and introduced himself to the rat and they shared their stories.

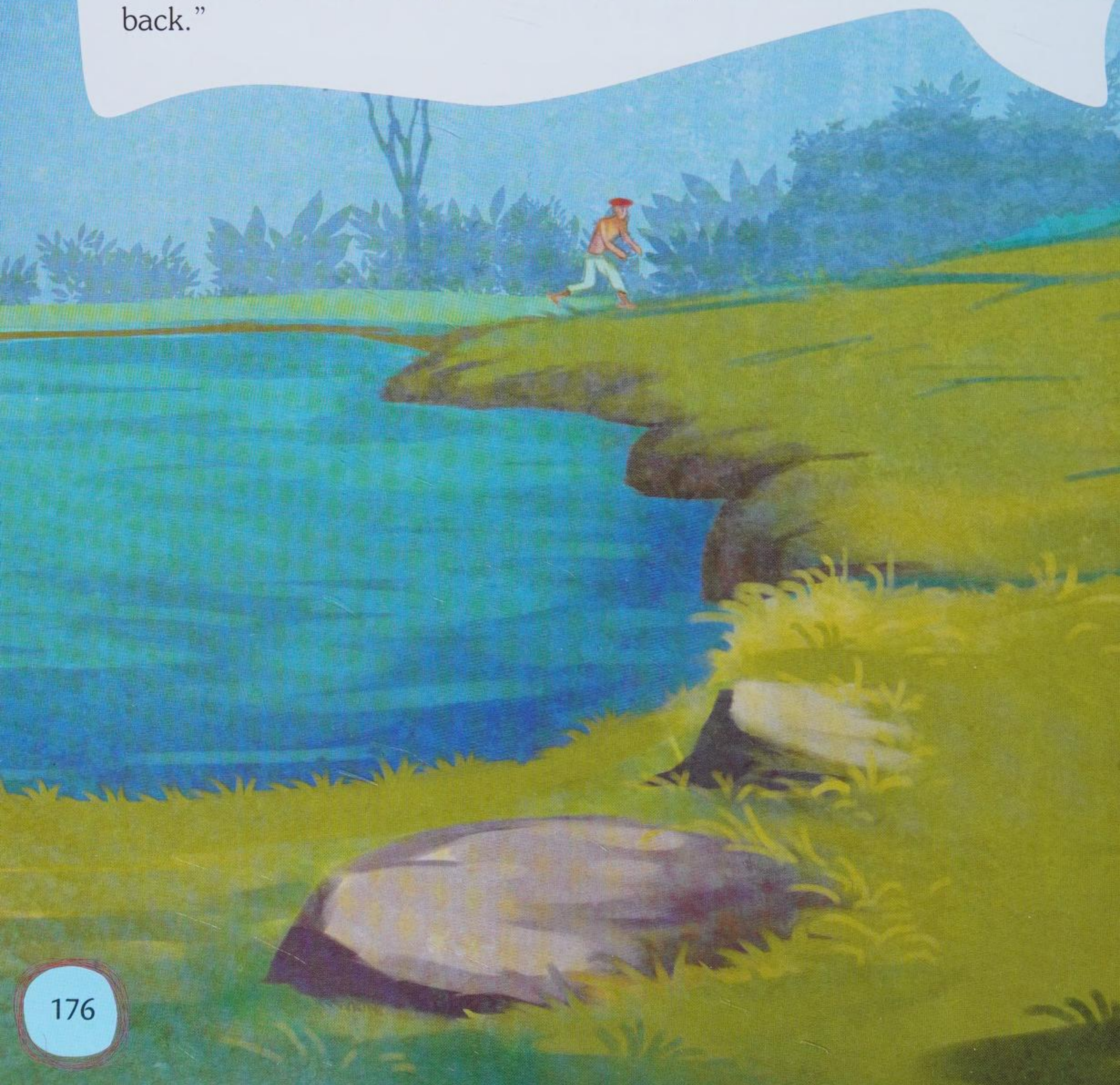
Moral of the Story

A person should have good friends.

44 THE RESCUE OF A DEER

One day three friends, Mandaraka, the turtle; Laghupatanaka, the crow and Hiranyaka, the rat were sitting and talking near a pond. At that time they saw a thirsty deer Chitranga coming near the pond after having been chased by a hunter. The deer decided to stay in the company of these three friends as he felt safe with them.

One day, when the deer did not come to meet them, they were worried about his safety. On advice of his friends, the crow flew to find their friend. Soon he saw the deer trapped in a hunter's net. The deer cried, "Please help me to come out, before the hunter comes back."



The crow soon returned and they discussed how the deer could be rescued. Then the crow soon arrived with the rat at the place where the deer was trapped. The rat cut the net with his sharp teeth to free the deer. By that time, the turtle too arrived there.

Just then, the hunter arrived and found that the deer had escaped. Seeing the hunter, the crow flew away, the rat hid in a hole and the deer ran fast into the forest. But the poor turtle moved slowly and was caught by the hunter. The hunter tied it and carried it on his back.

The three friends now began to think of some way to rescue the turtle. The crow said, "The deer should lie down on the way near the pond and pretend as if he is dead. I will sit on the deer's head and pretend to peck his eyes. When the hunter passes that way he will

think that the deer is dead, then he will put the bag aside and reach for the deer. Then the rat should go and release the turtle by biting off the strings." The deer did as he was told and soon the hunter caught sight of him lying down. Thinking the deer to be dead he threw the turtle aside and ran towards the deer.

Seeing the hunter coming near, the deer got up with a lightning speed and vanished into the forest. The disappointed hunter hurried to the spot where he had left the tortoise, but found that it was gone too. By that time the turtle reached the pond, and jumped into it, thus saving himself from the hunter.

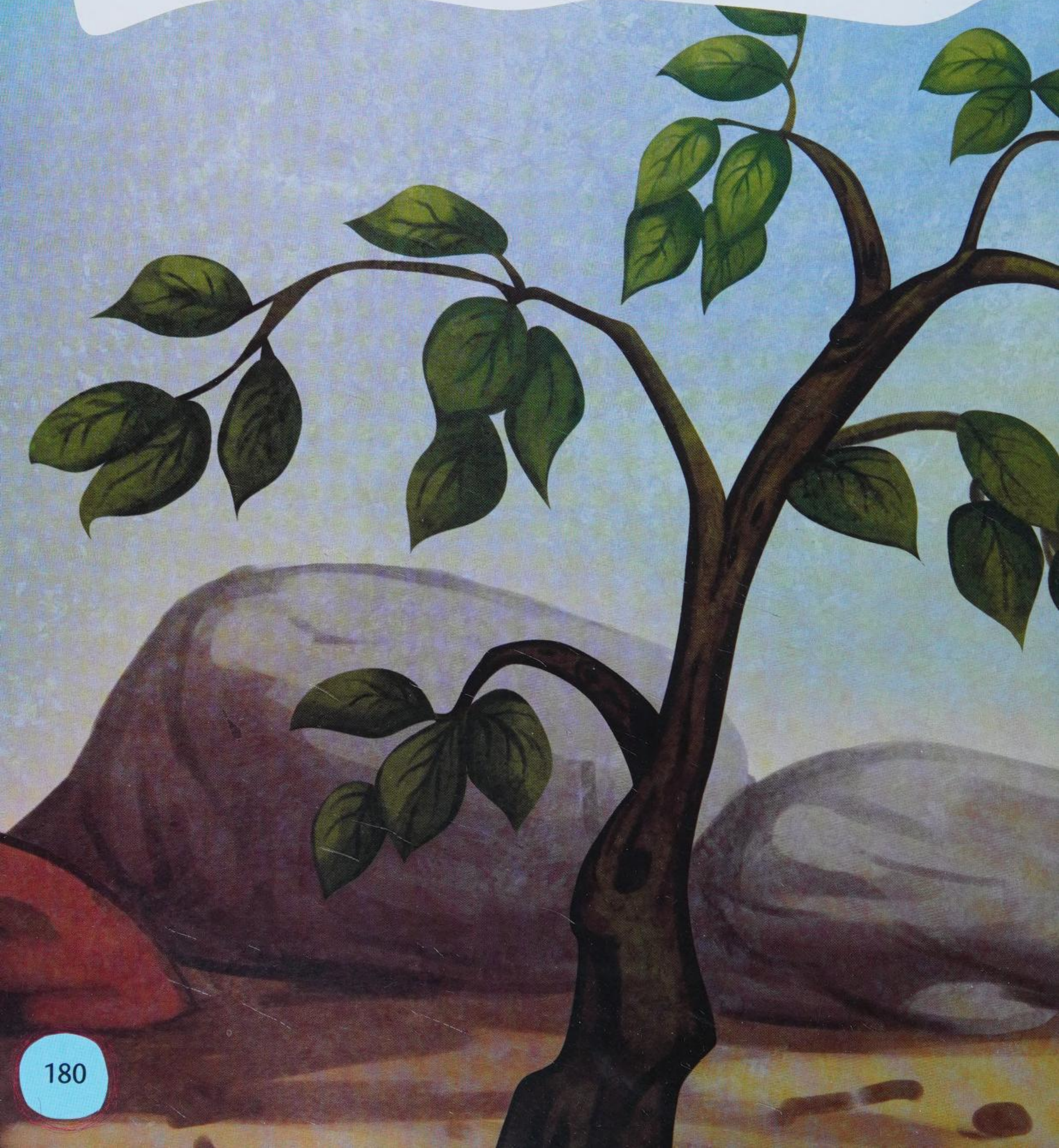
Moral of the Story

He who is faithful to his friends shall never taste defeat.

45

THE TALE OF A BIRD WITH TWO HEADS

A two headed bird named Bharunda lived on a tree. The tree stood on the bank of a lake. One day, when Bharunda was wandering on the banks, he found a fruit. When he ate the fruit, it was delicious. One of his heads mumbled, "Oh! What a fruit? I am sure the heavens have sent it for me. I am so lucky."



Hearing this, the second head said, "O brother, let me also taste the fruit you are praising so much."

The first head laughed and said, "Both of us have the same stomach. It makes no difference whether I eat it or you eat it. I shall give it to our beloved. She will be very happy."

The bird then went to his wife and gave the fruit to her to taste. The second head was disappointed at not being able to taste the fruit. One day, the second head found a poisonous fruit and told the first head, "You treacherous fellow. For what you have done to me, I will eat this poisonous fruit and avenge your insult."

The first head said, "You fool, if you eat that, both of us will die because we have the same body."

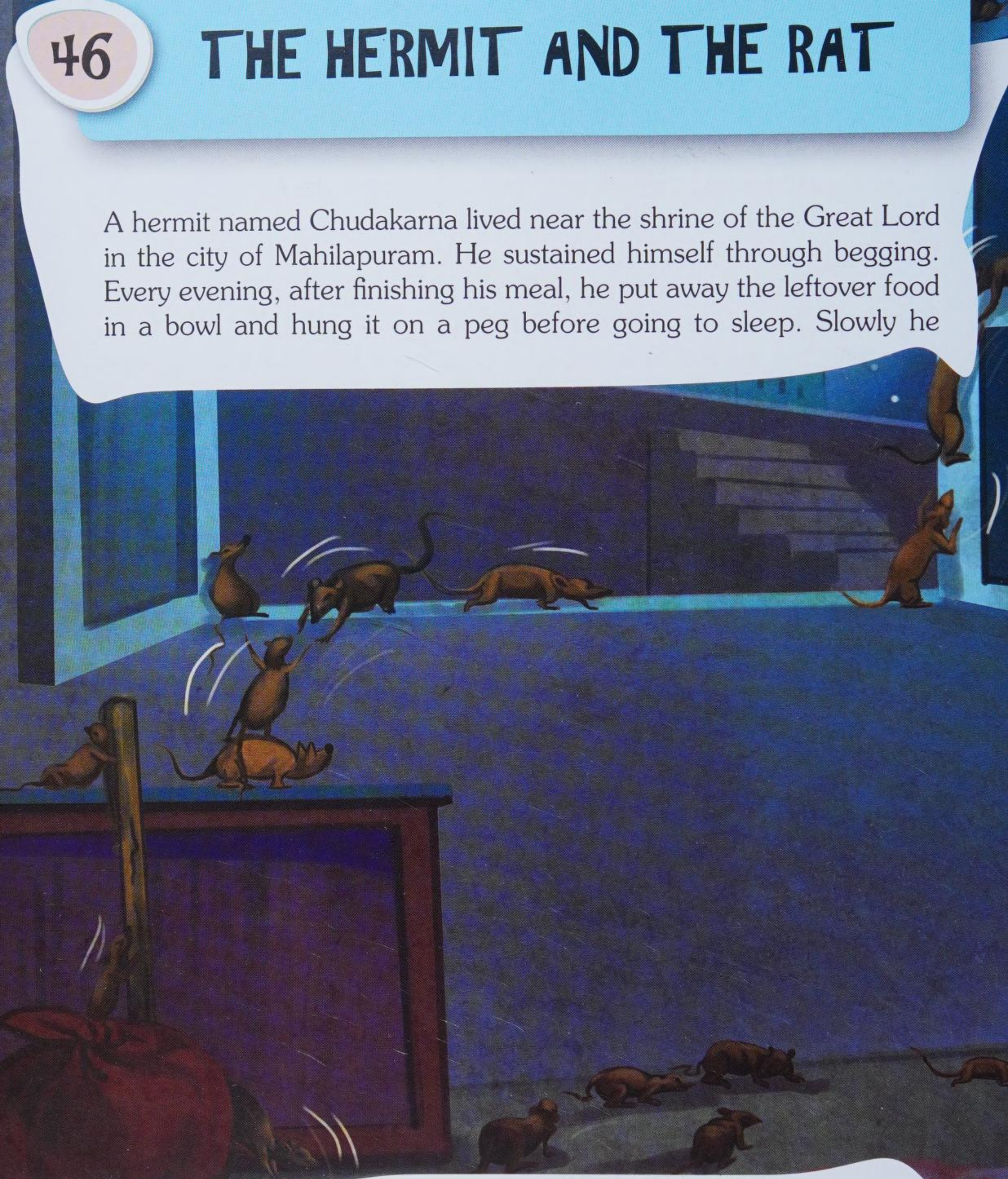
Ignoring his warning, the second head ate the poisonous fruit which led to its death.

Moral of the Story

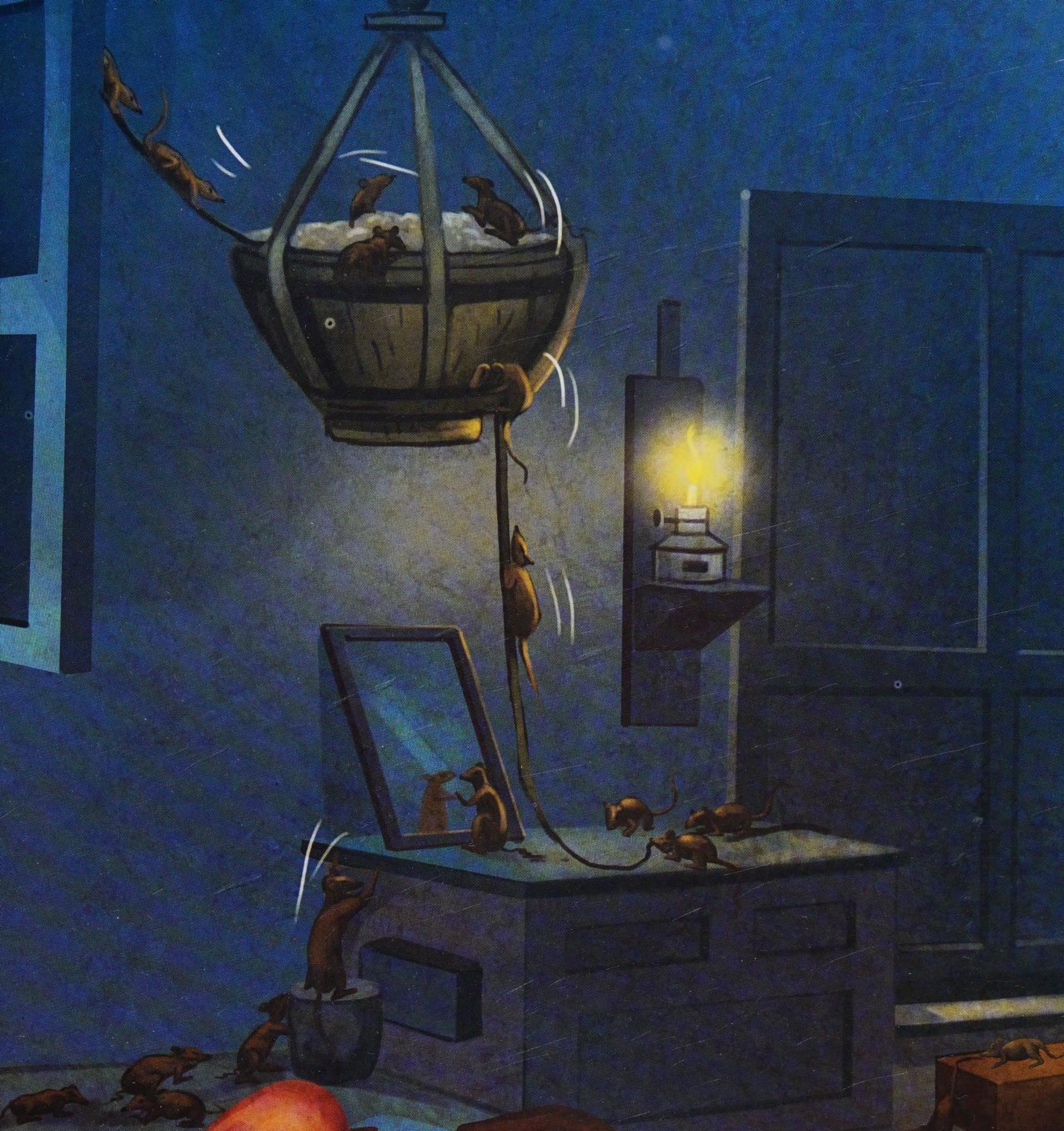
Those who are not united will be ruined.

46 THE HERMIT AND THE RAT

A hermit named Chudakarna lived near the shrine of the Great Lord in the city of Mahilapuram. He sustained himself through begging. Every evening, after finishing his meal, he put away the leftover food in a bowl and hung it on a peg before going to sleep. Slowly he



realized that, however careful he was in hiding the food, the leader of the rats, Hiranyaka took away the food and relished it with his family. Upset by this and out of fear of rats he moved the bowl from place to place and hung it higher each time but Hiranyaka reached the food every time.



One day, a guest came to the hermit's home. After dinner when they began talking, the hermit suddenly started hitting the begging bowl with a bamboo stick. Seeing him distracted, his friend asked him the cause of his worry. The hermit told him the story and said "I want to kill Hiranyaka."

The guest asked, "Where is his hole?" The hermit replied, "I don't know."

The guest said, "It is certain that the warmth exuded by his stockpiles gives him the ability to jump. Let us find his hole."

Soon they found the rats' hole, and on digging it, they found a lot of stockpiles. They cleared everything.

Now the guest told Chudakarna that he could sleep in peace. But hearing some sound, the hermit again started striking the bowl with the stick. Seeing this, the guest laughed and said, "Have no fear. The fellow's energy which enabled him to jump high is gone with his wealth."

After that day the hermit had a nice sleep.

Moral of the Story

A man is always full of energy due to the power of wealth.

47

THE MERCHANT'S SON

Once a merchant named Sagaragupta and his son Prapta lived in a city. One day Prapta purchased a book for a hundred gold pieces. The book had just one verse which read as follows:

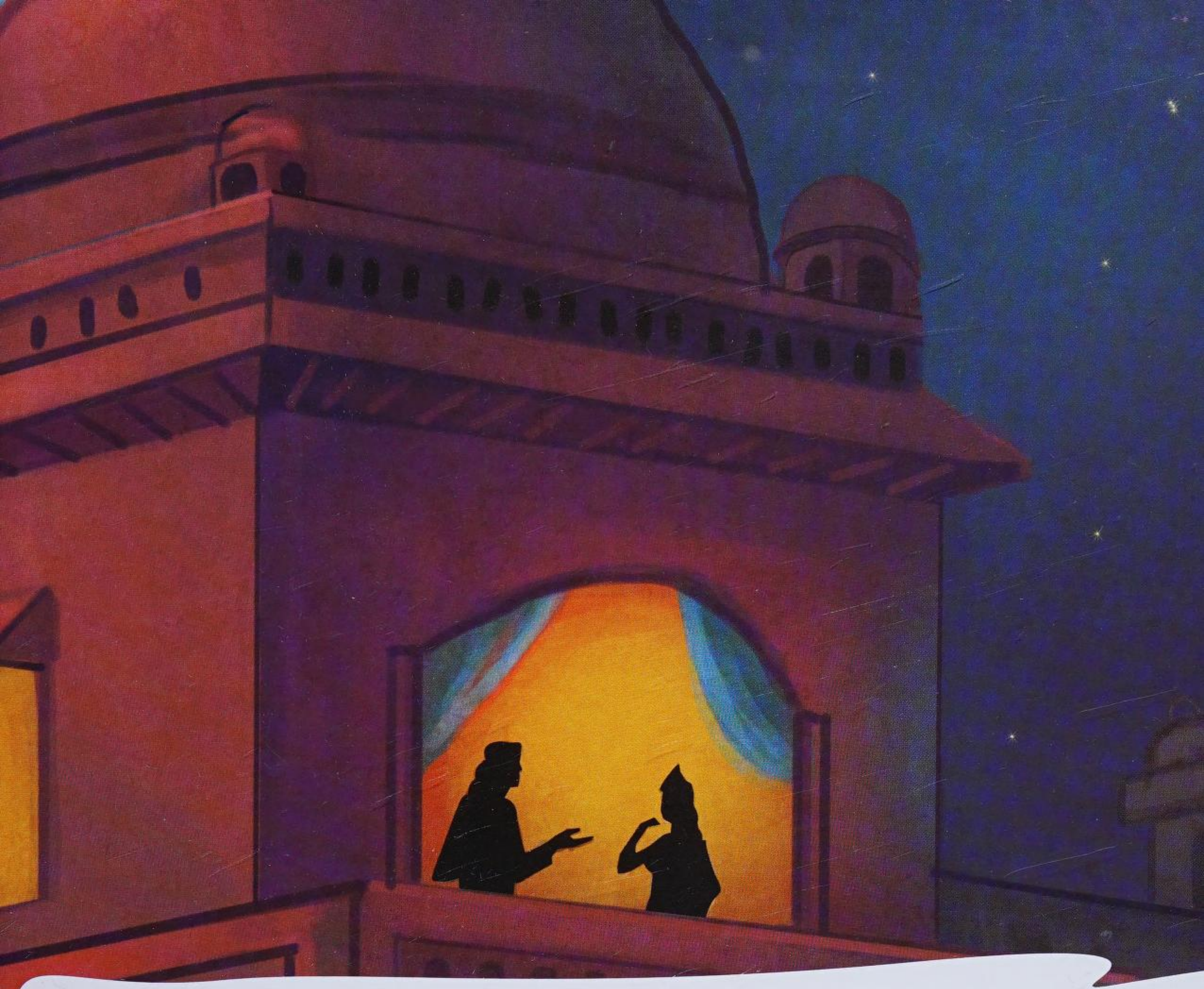
Man gets what is in his destiny. Even God cannot prevent it.

To me it makes no difference. What's mine can never be of others.

Knowing the cost of the book, Sagaragupta very angrily asked his son, "With this kind of foolish intelligence, how will you acquire wealth? Leave my house and try to make a living on your own."

Prapta left his house and after travelling for two days reached another city. There a man asked him, "Sir, where have you come from? And what is your name?"

Prapta replied, "The man gets what he is destined to have."He



gave the same reply on every occasion when he was asked his name.

One day, when the princess Chandravati was going through the city, she saw a prince uncommonly handsome and charming. At that very instant she fell in love with him. She asked her friends to call him to the palace at night.

Her friends invited the prince and said, "At night you will see a ladder hanging from the balcony of the palace meant for you to climb and get into the princess' chamber." But the prince decided not to meet the princess. That night, Prapta who was roaming around the city noticed the ladder. Out of curiosity, he climbed up. On seeing him, the princess was quite confident that he was the right man.

She took him lovingly inside her room and said, "Having fallen in love with you, I have given myself to you. Now that you know this, why don't you converse with me?"

Prapta replied, "A man gets what he is destined to have."

Hearing this, the princess sent him down the ladder.

Next day, when Prapta was roaming on the streets, he saw the marriage procession of a rich merchant's daughter entering the city. He joined the procession. Suddenly a mad elephant entered the procession and started attacking everyone. All the relatives of the bridegroom and the bridegroom himself, fled towards a far off place.

In this crisis, Prapta noticed the bride, left all alone. He went near the bride and told her, "Don't be afraid. I will protect you." Then he went near the elephant with a stick and shouted at him, "Get away from here."

The elephant actually retreated and went away. When all the people returned, the bride said, "He is the man who has saved my life. I am going to marry him." But again, Prapta said, "We only get what we deserve."

Soon, the princess and the king also arrived there. When the king asked Prapta to tell everything, he replied, "A man gets what he is destined to have."

The king married his daughter to him along with a grant of a thousand villages. The king also crowned him as the prince as he had no son. Prapta lived happily with his two wives forever.

Moral of the Story

A man gets what he is destined to have.

48

THE UNLUCKY WEAVER

Once a weaver named Somalika lived in a village. He was expert in making fine garments, but he was still poorer than other weavers. One day he told his wife, "This place does not offer me a decent living, so I intend moving elsewhere."

To this his wife replied, "It is not correct to say that wealth can be gained by moving to other places. Whatever is destined will happen at any cost."

But the merchant didn't listen to her words. He left his village and reached the city of Vardhamanapuram. Within three years he earned three hundred gold pieces. Then he decided to return home. Halfway, as he was travelling through a forest, he climbed a tree and fell asleep on a big branch. In his dream he saw the God of Destiny telling the God of Action, "The weaver is not destined to live in luxury. Why did you give him three hundred gold pieces?"

The God of Action replied, "I let Somalika save that much money because of his efforts. However, the final outcome is in your hands. So, you may deprive him of it." When Somalika woke up and looked for his bag, it was empty.

So, he decided to go back to the city again and work more. And in just one year he earned five hundred gold pieces and set out for home. Now he did not want to sleep. But he fell asleep and in his dreams he again heard the God of Destiny telling the God of Action, "How could this weaver save this much gold again?" The God of Action replied, "Hard work and enterprise must have their reward. But you should decide his fate."

The weaver woke up and found his gold missing again. Dejected, he decided to hang himself. As he put a rope around his neck, he heard a voice from the sky, "Stop, I am the God of Destiny. I took away your money but I will grant you a wish."

The weaver quickly replied, "Then give me lots of money."

The God of Destiny now said, "Go back to Vardhamanapuram and watch two merchants named Lobhi and Vyayasila living there to know the value of money."

The weaver, on reaching Vardhamanapuram, went to Lobhi's house first, and said, "I am a stranger to this place. Can I stay here for the night?"

Lobhi replied, "Oh yes! We shall be pleased to serve you."

But Lobhi's wife called her husband inside and shouted loudly,

"Who's this fellow? Why have you allowed him to stay here? We don't have money to feed beggars?" The weaver heard these words and thought, "They do not utter one kind word. They quarrel for nothing. Let me go to Vyayasila's house." He reached Vyayasila's house, and was welcomed warmly by Vyayasila and his wife. He was offered good food by them.

The weaver thought, "Vyayasila is poorer than Lobhi but he is kind and a good soul." He then prayed to the God of Destiny, "God! Let me live like Vyayasila." After the boon, the weaver came to know the value of money and lived happily ever after.

Moral of the Story

Don't ever fall into despair over the matter of wealth.

49 THE FRIENDLY RATS

Once a large community of rats lived happily in an old house in a town. One day, a group of elephants was passing through the town in search of water.

As the elephants walked through the streets, thousands of rats that were out looking for food got crushed under their feet and died. The rats that survived this tragedy cried, "We are being trampled

by the elephants. We must do something, so that such things do not happen again. The elephants will soon return from the lake and before that we need to decide on a plan."

Their leader advised them to meet the king of elephants and seek his help.

A group of rats met the king of elephants, and pleaded humbly, "Oh king, we have been living happily in this town. But now, thousands of rats have been crushed to death by elephants, while passing on their way to the lake. If they follow the same path to return to the forest, none of us will be left alive. Be merciful and spare us. We shall be of use to you some day." The elephant king agreed to their request and said, "It will never happen again."

One day, a hunter dug a huge pit and covered it with leaves and bushes to trap the elephants. When the elephant king and other elephants were passing that way, they fell into the pit and got trapped. The hunter then captured them by means of ropes.

When the hunter left that place to fetch help for transporting the elephants, the elephant king suddenly remembered the rats. He sent

a message to their king. No sooner did the king summon all rats and told them about the elephants, they went running to the spot where the elephant king stood bound with its group.

The rats said, "Friends, do not worry." Then they started biting the ropes which bound the elephants and in no time set the elephants free.

Moral of the Story

Make friends with everybody.

50

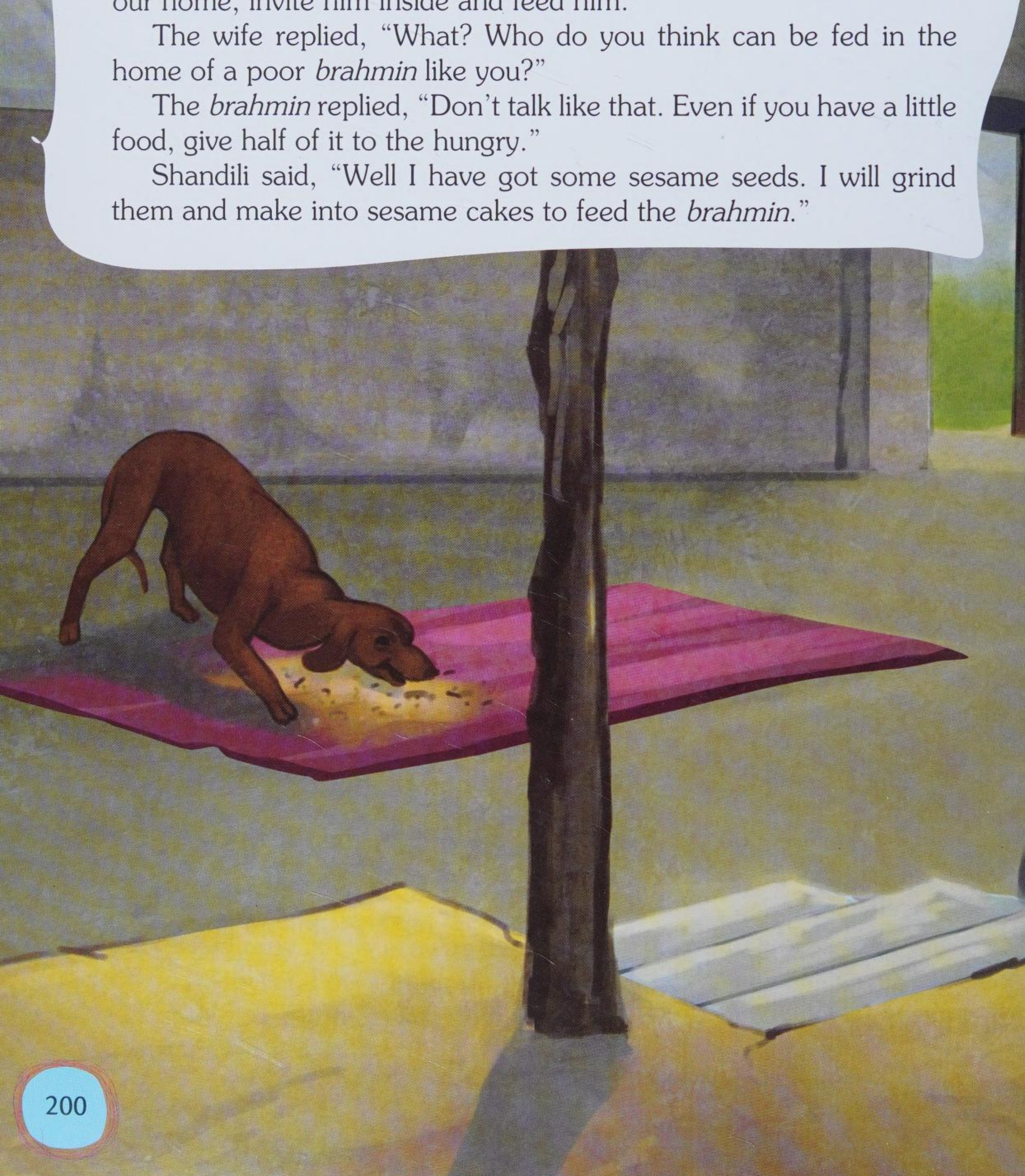
SHANDILI AND THE SESAME SEEDS

Once there was a poor *brahmin*. He never turned away anyone who came to him for food. One day he told his wife Shandili, "My dear, tomorrow I'll be going to the nearby town. If any *brahmin* comes to our home, invite him inside and feed him."

The wife replied, "What? Who do you think can be fed in the home of a poor *brahmin* like you?"

The *brahmin* replied, "Don't talk like that. Even if you have a little food, give half of it to the hungry."

Shandili said, "Well I have got some sesame seeds. I will grind them and make into sesame cakes to feed the *brahmin*."



Next morning, when the *brahmin* left the house, Shandili cleaned the sesame seeds, removed the husks, washed and put them under the sun to dry.

While she was preoccupied, a dog came and put his mouth over the sesame seeds. Noticing this she worried how she could now feed a *brahmin*. She thought, "I will take the seeds to some other house and exchange them for some unhusked seeds."

So she went to her neighbour and said, "Sister, today is a holy day and my husband is away. He has asked me to feed a poor *brahmin* on this day. But I have got only husked sesame seeds. Would you mind exchanging these seeds for some unhusked ones?"

The neighbour was delighted at such a bargain and agreed to exchange her unhusked sesame for the husked seeds. She went inside and brought the unhusked seeds. When she was about to make the exchange, her son stopped her saying, "Mother, stop! The seeds that Shandili has brought do not seem to be good. Why should anyone give away good husked seeds for raw seeds? There must be some reason for it!"

The lady realized that Shandili must have brought spoilt seeds and tried to trick her in exchanging them. So she made an excuse and sent Shandili away.

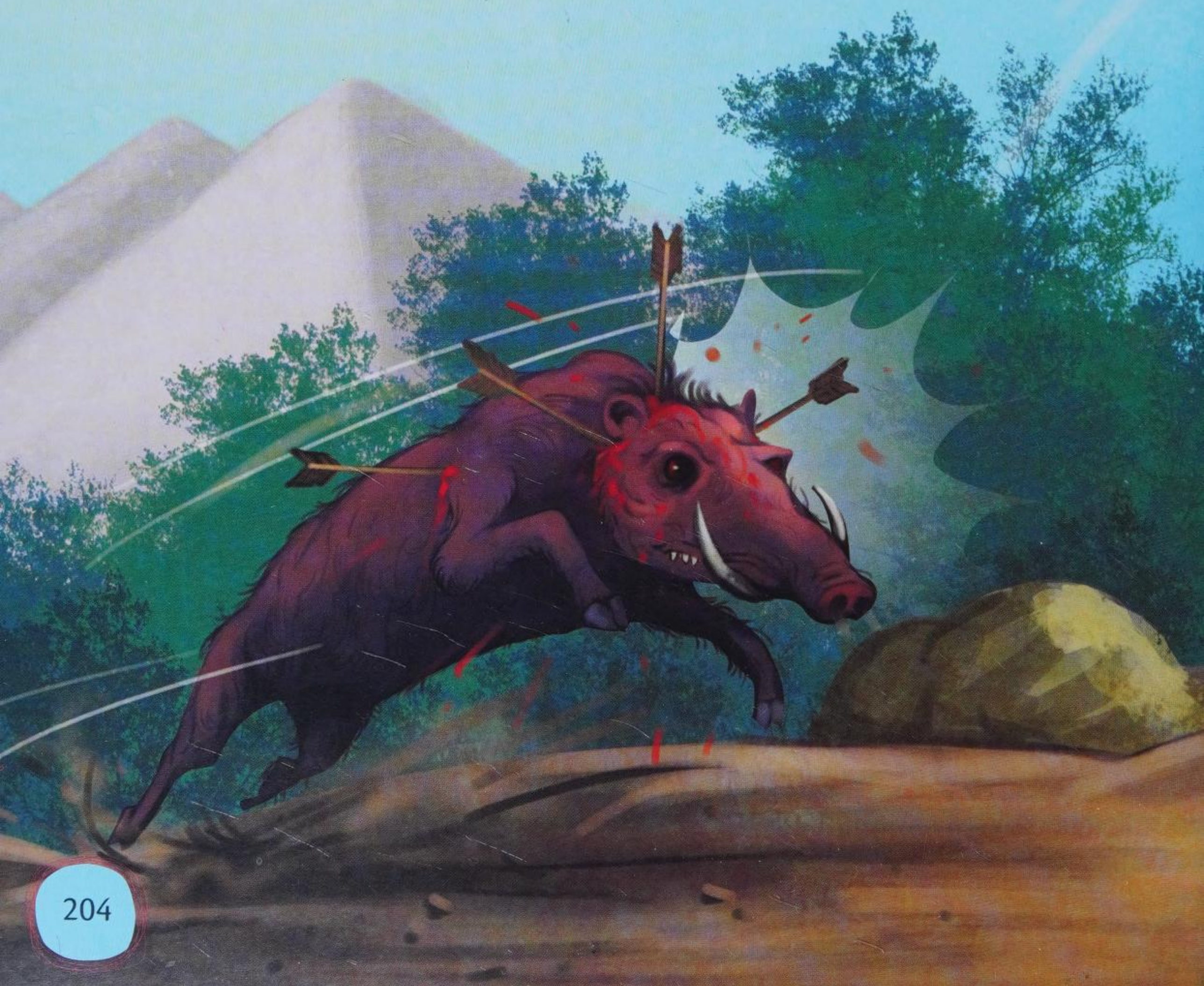
Moral of the Story

When you are offered something, don't be carried away by it. Think and analyse.

51

THE HUNTER AND THE JACKAL

A long time ago there lived a Pulinda tribesman, who went to the forest everyday for hunting. He lived by selling the dead animals. If he caught a small animal, he would take it home for a meal. His wife would cook the animal and make a delicious meal. One day when he was hunting in the forest, he saw a wild boar roaming around. He thought, "I am lucky today. This boar looks fat and healthy and if I am able to catch it, that would serve a good meal for my family and friends." Happy at the sight, he took his bow and aimed a sharp arrow at the boar. The boar was severely wounded but in turn it attacked the hunter and killed him. The boar also died later due to severe injuries.



At that moment, a hungry jackal arrived at the place where the dead bodies of the hunter and the boar lay. He was excited and said, "Hah! Hah! Fortune is in my favour for she has provided this unexpected feast for me. Now, I shall consume this food in such a way that it lasts for many days to sustain my life."

Thinking this the jackal went closer to the body of the hunter. He saw a bow lying on his body and thinking it to be part of the body; he started nibbling at the string of the bow. When the string snapped, the tip of the bow pierced his mouth and came out through the center of his skull and he died.

Moral of the Story

Fate plays an important role in our lives.

52 THE SNAKE AND THE RAT

Once upon a time a snake charmer lived in a village. He had many small and big snakes in his basket. He did snake shows in the village fairs and earned money. One day when he was roaming in the forest to catch more snakes he saw a black cobra in the bushes. He brought it home and kept it in a basket from where it could not escape. The cobra did not like its new home as it was dark inside. Though he was

given food on time, it was very less, and moreover, he did not like to live in captivity.

Everyday he struggled to come out of the basket but in vain. He thought, "I am starving here. I am sure to die in this place."

One day, a rat was passing near this basket. He looked at the basket in wonder and thought, "Hmmm, what is this basket for? Surely, there must be some tasty eatable in it. Let me make a hole in it, and sneak into the basket."

He made a hole and entered the basket but found nothing except darkness inside. The snake, which was sleeping, woke up on hearing the sound made by the rat. It quickly snatched the rat and swallowed it. He then discovered the hole and was lucky to escape through the hole made by his prey. The rat was fated to die in the hands of the snake.

Moral of the Story

No one can alter fate.

53

THE MONKEY AND THE CROCODILE

A monkey named Raktmukh lived on a blackberry tree situated near a river bank. One day a crocodile named Karatmukh came out of the river and sat under the tree.

When the monkey saw him, he said, "Welcome friend! Please have some fruits." The monkey then threw down some berries from the tree. The crocodile found the fruits very delicious and took some of them for his wife. After that, each day the crocodile started visiting the monkey to enjoy the fruits offered.

One day, the crocodile's wife asked him, "Where do you find such delicious fruits?" The crocodile replied, "A friend of mine, a monkey, gives me these fruits."

Immediately she said, "If the fruits are so sweet, the heart of your friend must also be very sweet. If you love me, bring his heart for me."

The crocodile, tried to convince her and said, "My dear, How can I kill a friend?"

But his wife insisted, "If you really love me, you have to bring me his heart. If not, I'll starve to death."

Next day, the crocodile reached the tree a bit late. The monkey had been waiting for him. Seeing him he said, "Why are you late today?"

The crocodile replied, "My wife was very angry at me. She told me that I am an ungrateful friend, as I have never invited you to our home. If you do not come with me today, she will leave me and go away. So please come with me. You can sit on my back and I will carry you to my home." The monkey thought for sometime and then sat on the crocodile's back. While crossing the river the crocodile started swimming into the deep water. The monkey got scared and told him to go slowly.

Seeing the scared monkey, the crocodile said, "My dear friend, I am sorry, but I've fooled you! My wife wanted to eat your heart and I had no other choice but to bring you here."

The monkey was scared at first but thoughtfully replied, "Oh! Friend, why didn't you say so before, right at the start? I have left my heart on the tree." On hearing this the crocodile was surprised but the monkey continued, "As we jump on trees, we leave our heart on the highest branch, where it is safe. Let us go back and bring it."

The crocodile believed his friend's words. As soon as they reached the river bank, the monkey jumped on to the blackberry tree.

The crocodile waited for the monkey to come down. But when he did not come down the crocodile asked, "Friend, come down quickly, my wife will be waiting for us."

The monkey laughed at him and said, "You fool! Have you seen anyone keep his heart away? By God's grace I have got back my life. Go away from here and never ever come back."

Moral of the Story

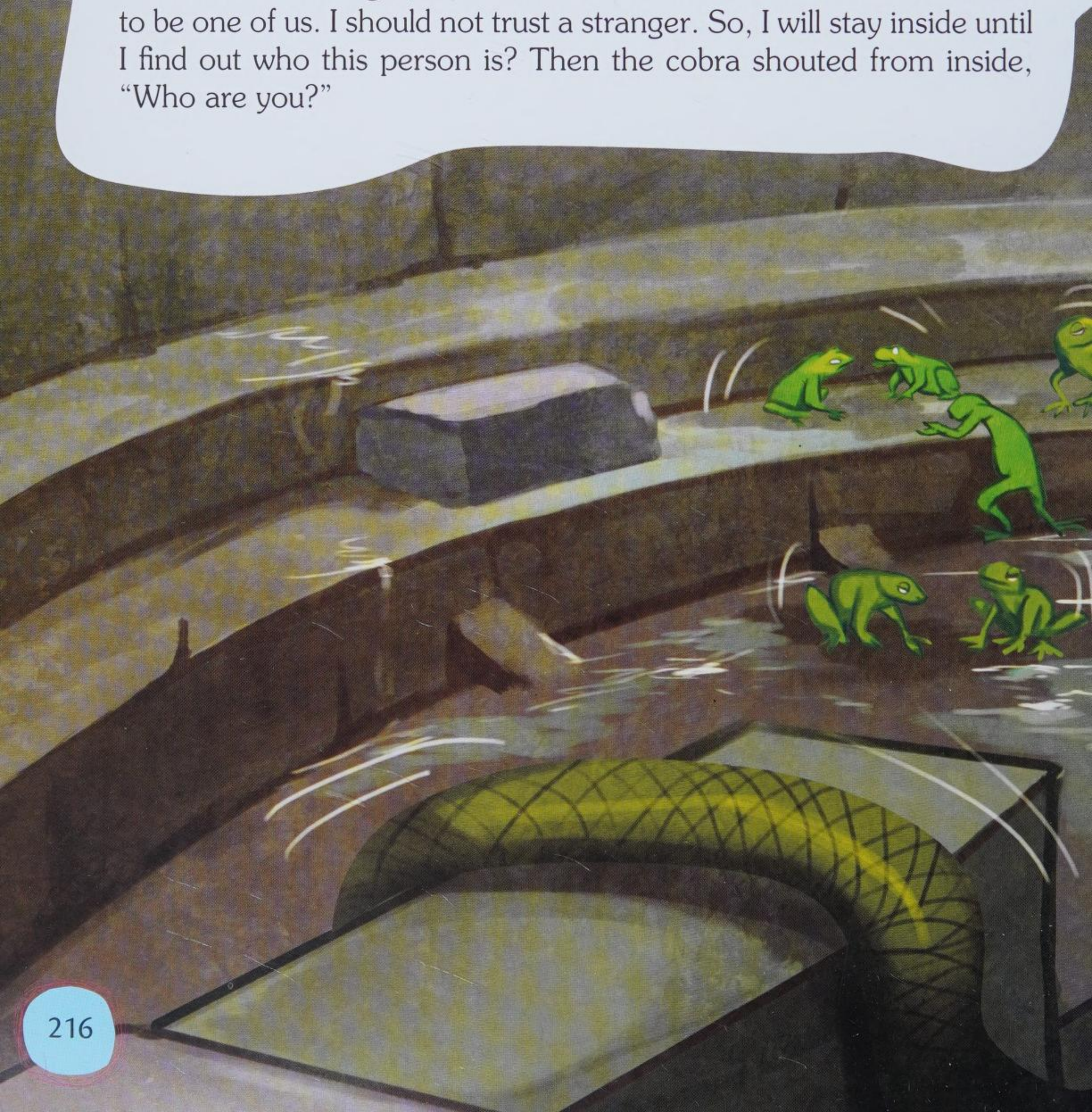
Never trust a man who is not to be trusted.

54

THE COBRA AND THE FROG KING

Gangadatta, the king of frogs, lived in a well. He was not liked by his people, so he decided to leave his kingdom and left the well. He wanted to teach his people a lesson. He noticed a cobra named Priyadarsana entering his pit. Suddenly, an idea came to him, "What if I lead this deadly cobra into my well and have him kill all my kinsmen, who made my life miserable?" The frog king stood at the entrance of the snake pit and said, "Priyadarsana, please come out."

The cobra thought, "Who could this fellow be? He does not seem to be one of us. I should not trust a stranger. So, I will stay inside until I find out who this person is? Then the cobra shouted from inside, "Who are you?"



The frog king said, "I am Gangadatta, king of frogs. I have come to seek your help."

The cobra said, "I cannot believe you. Can there be friendship between a blade of dry grass and fire?"

The frog king convinced him saying, "It is true that you are my enemy. But, now I need your help in taking revenge on my own kinsmen."

The cobra said, "How I can help you?"

The frog king said, "Come with me to the well where I live. Go inside and eat all the frogs except my family."

The snake crawled inside the well and ate all the enemies of the frog king.

Finding no more frogs to eat, the cobra told the frog king, "Friend! I have already destroyed all your enemies. Now I need some more frogs as I am hungry."

The frog king told him, "Now only my family is left. Please go back to your place."

The cobra protested, "How can I go back? Someone must have occupied my house now. I will stay here, and you have to provide me with food. You can offer me just a frog everyday and if you don't, then I shall eat all of them."

Hearing this threat, the frog king thought, "What a terrible mistake I have made in making an enemy as my friend! I must get out of the trap of the cobra."

The frog king started giving one frog a day to the cobra, which ate that, as well as many others behind the frog king's back. One by one, all the frogs in the well were eaten up, except the frog king. Now the cobra asked for more frogs.

The frog king said, "Friend, don't worry. I'm here to help you. I will bring the frogs from the other wells also and offer them to you as food." Saying this it went out of the well.

The cobra, after a long wait realized that he had been fooled by the frog king. So he thought of a plan to bring him back to the well.

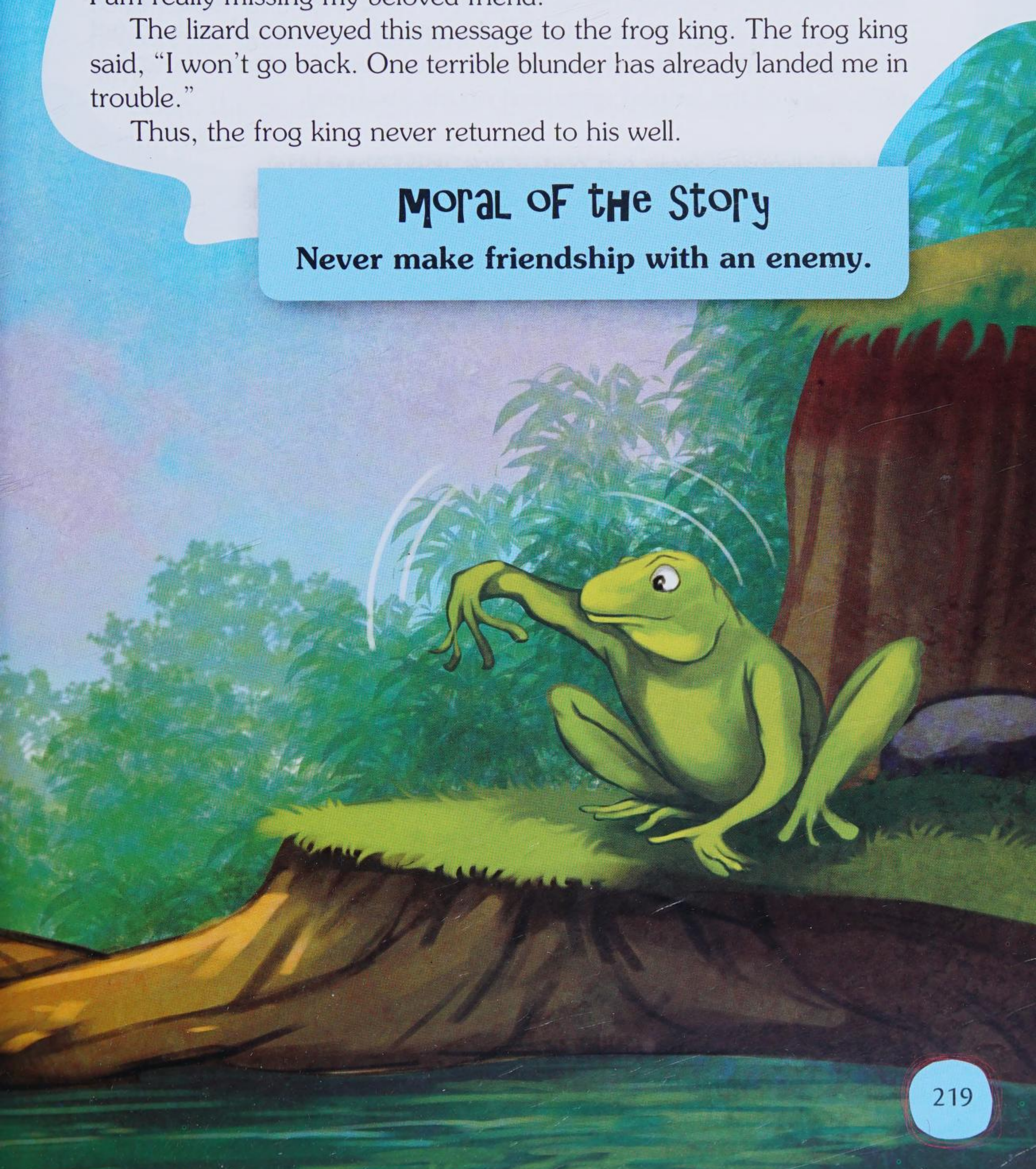
After a long time, the cobra addressed a lizard which also lived in the well. He said, "Please tell the frog king that he need not take the trouble of finding food for me. Let him come back to his old place. I am really missing my beloved friend."

The lizard conveyed this message to the frog king. The frog king said, "I won't go back. One terrible blunder has already landed me in trouble."

Thus, the frog king never returned to his well.

Moral of the Story

Never make friendship with an enemy.



55 THE TRUTHFUL POTTER

Once upon a time, a potter named Samaradheera lived in a village. He made mud pots to earn his living. One day, as he was entering his courtyard at a fast pace, he fell on a half broken pot with sharp edges, which cut his forehead and cheek. He quickly returned home to get some ointment and bandages. As the wound was treated without any skill, scars of the wound remained on his forehead.

Sometime later a severe famine struck the village. The potter, along with other people had to leave the village. He went to a distant land, where he joined the king's army. One day, the king noticed the potter's wound and thought, "This fellow must be a great warrior, as he has got such a terrible wound on his face." He called his commander and told him, "He is a great warrior. Treat him with respect and great attention. We are lucky to have such a hero in our army!"

Soon, the potter became the king's favourite, and received royal treatment.

One day, the king met the potter while inspecting the army. He asked him, "O great warrior! Tell me where and in which battle you got wounded?"

The potter replied, "My Lord, this is not a scar from any battle. I am a potter and one day when I was going home with my pots, I fell down and the pieces of the broken pots pierced my face and left this scar."

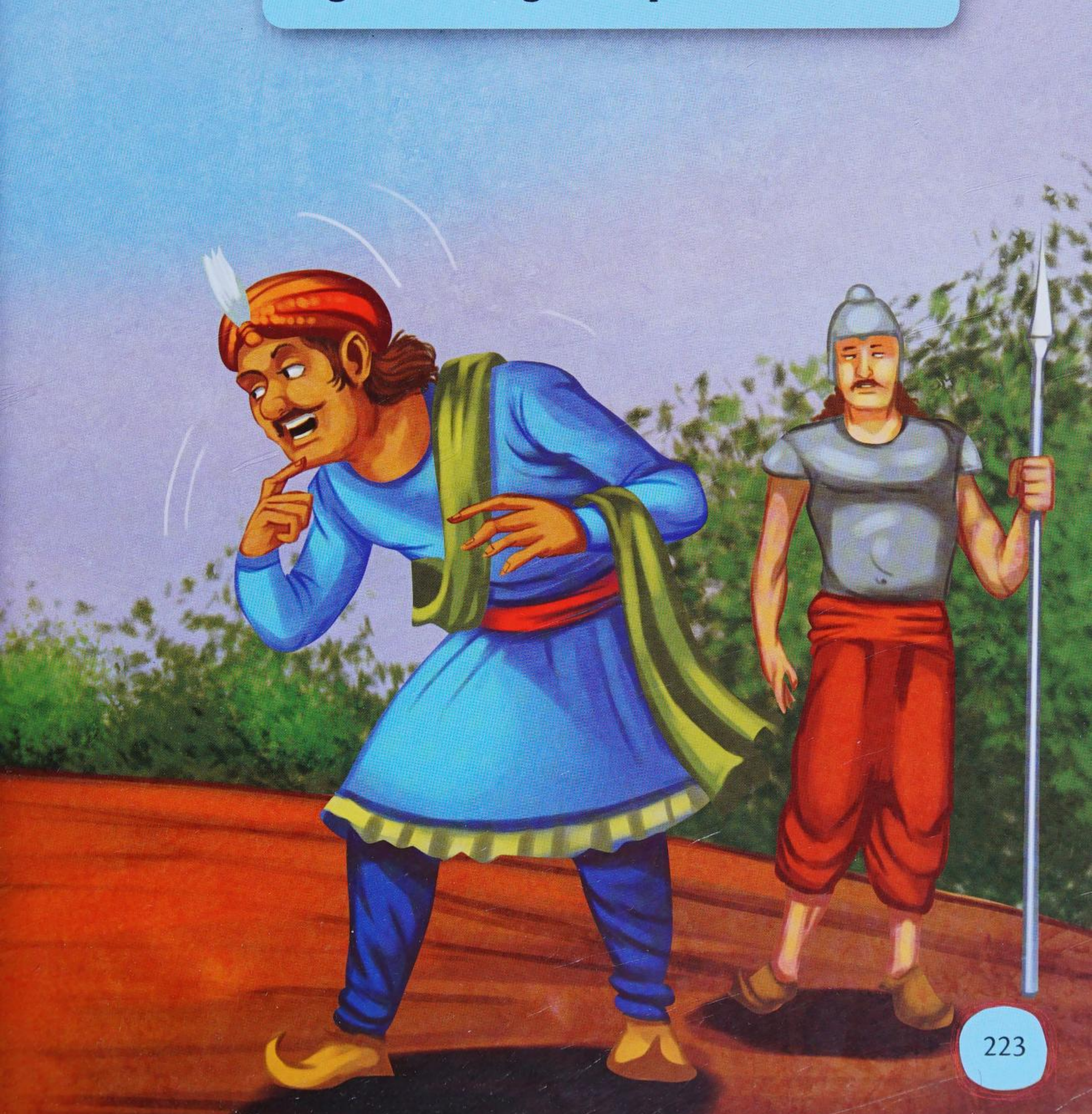
Hearing this, the king got angry as he thought that he was deceived by the potter. He called his soldiers and said, "Take this fellow away! Give him a good thrashing!"

The potter pleaded, "Your majesty! Please give me a chance to fight and show my valour."

But the king refused to hear him saying, "No, no! You may be full of excellent qualities; but you better leave this place before others know that you're just a potter."

Moral of the Story

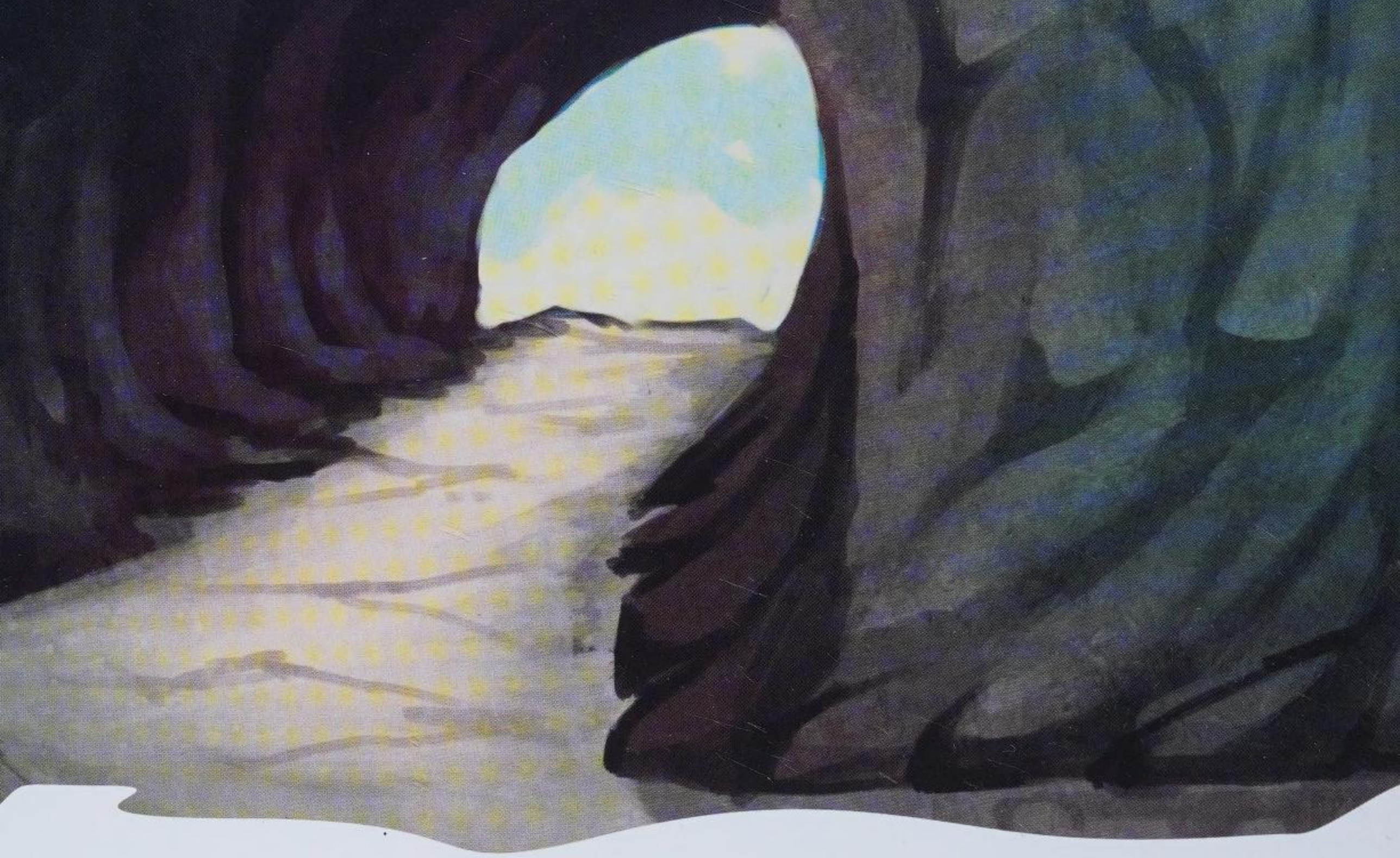
Right knowledge is required to succeed.



56

THE LIONESS AND THE YOUNG JACKAL

Once a lion couple lived in a forest. When the lioness gave birth to twins, the lion went out daily to bring food for her and the cubs.



One day, he wandered all over the forest in search of food but could not find any prey. When he was returning home, he found a baby jackal alone in the forest. He took the baby jackal to his house. He told the lioness, "My dear! Today, I couldn't get any food except this baby jackal. I have not killed him because he is a baby. But if you are hungry, you may kill him."

The lioness got angry on hearing this and said, "No, how can I kill a baby animal, and become a sinner? This fellow will be my third son."

The jackal baby became their family member and they all ate, drank, played and slept together.

One day a wild elephant passed by. Seeing the elephant the two lion cubs decided to attack the elephant. But the jackal cub restrained them saying, "Oh, No! This is an elephant, don't go near him brothers." Though disappointed, the lion cubs agreed, and all three went back home. On reaching home, the lion cubs told their parents all that had happened, describing how their brother had behaved. Reacting to this, the jackal cub said, "Shut up! Don't make me lose my temper!"

Listening to this, the lioness took the jackal baby aside and told him, "My son, don't get angry with them. They are your brothers!"

The jackal cub was hurt and asked the lioness, "How am I inferior to them? Why should the two ridicule me? I will kill both of them."

Amused by the words of the baby jackal and wishing him long life, the lioness said, "You are still a child. I brought you up taking pity on you. Your brothers are also young. Before they grow old and know that you are different from them, leave this place and join your own folk."

Realizing the danger ahead, the jackal cub left the lion family in search of his own folk.

Moral of the Story

Know the truth about yourself and act accordingly.

57 THE DONKEY IN TIGER SKIN

Once a washerman named Suddhapata lived in a village. He had a donkey. Suddapata did not feed him properly. So the donkey became very feeble and weak.

One day, when the washerman was passing through a forest, he found the skin of a dead tiger. He thought, "I can cover my donkey with this skin and let him graze in the wheat fields? Mistaking him for a tiger, people will not come near him. This way, my donkey will have plenty of food."

Then, covering his donkey with the skin, he told him, "You can now go to the fields and graze all you want. But keep one thing in mind, do not bray, the village people will recognize you."

The donkey grazed in the fields and ate barley to his heart's content. Early in the morning the washerman led the donkey back home.

As the time passed, the donkey became fat and healthy. One day, the donkey, while grazing, heard the bray of a female donkey, "Hooohoo!...Hooohoo... at a distance." The instant he heard the braying, he too started braying loudly in response.

Hearing him, the watchman and others at the farm recognized him, "Oh! It's a donkey," they said. Realizing the truth, they killed him with stones and blows from wooden staves."

Moral of the Story

Silence can sometimes be golden.

58

THE CARPENTER AND THE CAMEL

In the city of Nagara, there lived a carpenter named Ujjwalaka, who was extremely poor. He realized that everyone else in his profession was rich and he alone was very poor. This thought made him very unhappy. He decided to leave the city and seek his fortune elsewhere. He began his journey to a new country.

On the way, he saw a female camel who was separated from her caravan and had just delivered a baby. Seeing them, he returned to his home taking the camel and her calf. Every day he fed them with bundles of tender leaves.

The camel regained her strength and the calf became an adult. The carpenter started selling camel's milk and earned good money.

The carpenter loved the camel so much that he bought a bell and hung it around her neck. One day he thought, "If one camel can fetch so much money, how much more would I earn, if I buy more camels and sell their milk?" He told his wife that he would borrow money and buy more camels. He told his wife to take care of the camel and her calf until his return.

He bought more camels and appointed a caretaker to handle the camel herd. He agreed to give one camel to the caretaker every year as salary and also camel's milk to drink. The carpenter and his wife started living happily.

Every day the camels went to the nearby forest to feed on the fresh green leaves. After grazing, they returned home. But the senior camel stayed in the forest for more time and joined the herd later. The other camels advised her to return along with them but the senior camel was stubborn.

One day, a lion saw the camels leaving the forest in a herd and the senior camel staying back and eating the grass leisurely. By the time she finished her grazing, the others reached home. The senior camel lost her way and panicked. At that time the lion, which was following her, pounced on her and soon tore her to pieces.

Moral of the Story

Follow the advice of wise men.

59 THE SMART JACKAL

In the deep forest, lived a jackal named Mahachataraka. One day he found the dead body of an elephant. He was unable to bite through the thick skin of the elephant. At that moment a lion came that way. Seeing the lion, the jackal humbly bowed and said, "Welcome, my lord! I am your obedient servant. At your command, I am keeping a vigil on the body of the elephant. Please help yourself."

The lion said, "You know my friend, I do not eat something others have killed. You may take it as my gift to you."

After the lion had left, a tiger came that way. The jackal thought, "How do I escape him?" He thought of a clever trick.

The jackal went halfway to greet the tiger and said, "O sir! Why are you entering this area of death? The lion has killed this elephant and asked me to keep watch on it. He has gone to take bath. Please go away! You're risking your life!"

The tiger got frightened and told the jackal, "No, no! For mercy's sake! Don't call the lion. I'll run away!" And he ran away.

After sometime, a leopard came by and the jackal thought, "Oh! Here is another intruder! But his sharp teeth can tear through the elephant skin for me. I should use him."

Then the jackal went to the leopard and said, "Friend! Welcome to a hearty meal! A lion killed this elephant, and has gone away to take bath. Let's have this meal before he returns."

The leopard, however, said, "I am pleased by your hospitality. Let me start, but alert me when the lion comes."

As he tore through the elephant's skin and took a bite, the jackal said in panic, "Go quickly, the lion is coming."

The leopard immediately left his food and ran away into the forest. When the jackal had just begun to taste the meat, another jackal came that way. Now the jackal thought, "He's my kinsman. I can fight him off." He attacked the other jackal and killed him, after which he enjoyed the elephant meat for a long time.

Moral of the Story

It's smart to fight out with an equal.

60

THE UNHAPPY DOG

Once a dog named Chitranga lived in a village. One year the village received no rain and came under a famine. Due to this the food became scarce, dogs and other animals started dying and their families started becoming extinct. So he decided to leave for another town.

In the new town, he found a wealthy man's house. The woman of the house was lazy and careless, and never bothered to close the doors of her house.

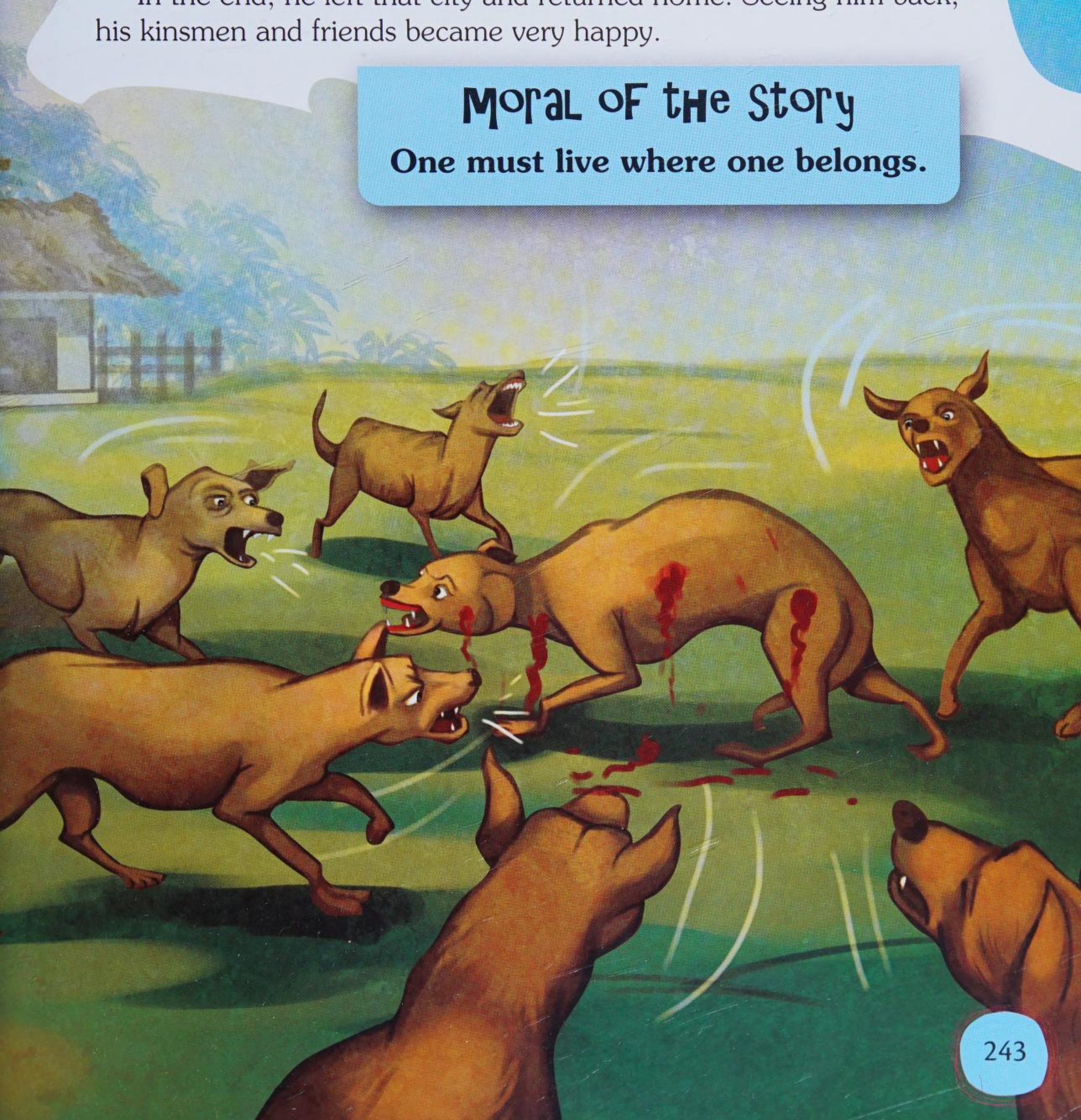
Every day, Chitranga would sneak into the open house, steal food and eat to his heart's content. He would enjoy a variety of fine foods until he was satisfied.

One day, as he came out of the house after eating food, the street dogs attacked him and wounded him severely. Then he thought, "Oh, I made a mistake coming here. Home was better even if there was no food. There was no struggle like this for life. Nobody comes and fights with you. Let me go home."

In the end, he left that city and returned home. Seeing him back, his kinsmen and friends became very happy.

Moral of the Story

One must live where one belongs.



61

THE LION AND THE FOOLISH DONKEY

A lion named Karalakesara lived in a forest. Dhoomra, a jackal, was his faithful servant. One day, the lion was badly wounded in a fight with an elephant and could not move. As a result, he and the jackal had to remain without food. Unable to bear the hunger, the jackal told his master, "Master, I am starving. Please do something." The lion said, "Can't you see how helpless I am. You go and catch some animal."

So the jackal went off in search of a prey. After sometime, he found a donkey named Lambakarna grazing in the jungle. The jackal went to him and said, "O my friend, Is something wrong with you? You're looking weak and lean!"

The donkey said, "Oh, yes, I'm. My master treats me cruelly laying heavy loads on my back. And in return he hardly gives me a proper meal."

The jackal said, "What a pity! Why don't you come with me then? I will take you to a beautiful place where you can have fresh green grass and sweet water to drink. You can happily spend your time there."

Pleased by the offer, the donkey agreed to go with the jackal, who took him to the lion's den. As soon as the lion saw the donkey, he jumped on him, but missed his aim. The donkey was shocked at this sudden attack and ran away at a great speed. The lion made great efforts to reach him and strike him, but failed.

Angry at the lion's failure, the jackal told him, "Sir, you've spoiled my plan. Why were you so hasty?"

The lion explained, "I was so hungry that I could not control myself on seeing my prey."

The jackal told, "Ok, I will now go and try to bring him back again. But be careful not to mess up this time."

Then he went in search of the donkey and found him grazing on a river bank. The donkey looked at him and asked, "Why have you come again? I'm really frightened. Who was your friend who almost killed me?"

The jackal said, "Oh my friend! You are so innocent. It was a female donkey, who fell in love with you the moment she saw you. She has sent a message to you that she will die, if you do not return to her."

The foolish donkey believed in the jackal's words and followed him again. The lion, who was waiting for him, pounced on him and killed him.

Moral of the Story

Foolishness will always lead to destruction.

62

THE FOOLISH BARBER AND THE MONKS

Once a merchant named Ratnakara lived in the city of Pataliputra. He led a pious life, but through the cruel play of fate, he lost all his money. He was very sad and decided that death alone could solve his problems. With these thoughts he fell asleep and started to dream. In the dream he saw the figure of a *sadhu* who told him, "I am Padmanidhi, the treasure collected by your ancestors. Do not lose heart; just do as I tell you. Tomorrow morning I will visit you in this form. You hit me with a thick stick on my head. I will turn into gold and then you can live happily ever after."

Next morning, the merchant woke up and thought about his dream. After sometime, a barber came to his house to give him a shave. Suddenly the figure of his dream appeared in front of him.

He could not believe his eyes. He immediately hit the figure on its head with a thick stick just as he was told in the dream. Ho! The dream came true. The figure turned into gold. He dismissed the barber after giving him some clothes and money, and said, "Do not tell what you saw here to anyone."

The barber promised and went home. He then began to think on what he had seen. He concluded that whenever *sadhus* are hit on the head they turn into gold. He decided to try it too and become rich.

The next day, he went to a monastery and requested the monks to come to his house.

The monks followed the barber to his house. When they stepped in, the barber closed all the exits and started hitting them on the head with the stick. A few died and the others, with their heads broken, started making terrible sounds.

The soldiers passing by the house heard their cries and went to their rescue. The soldiers seized the barber and took him along with the *sadhus* to the king. The king asked him, "Why have you attacked these holy men?"

The barber answered, "In the circumstances, what else could I do?" and narrated the whole story. The king immediately summoned the merchant. The merchant told the king how he got his ancestral wealth by hitting a *sadhu* who was personification of his wealth. The king ordered his men to punish the barber.

Moral of the Story

Ill considered acts always result in disaster.

63

THE BRAHMINI AND THE MONGOOSE

Once a *brahmin* named Deva Sharma lived in a town. His wife, *brahmini* delivered a son and at the same time a female mongoose died after giving birth to a male mongoose. So his wife adopted the

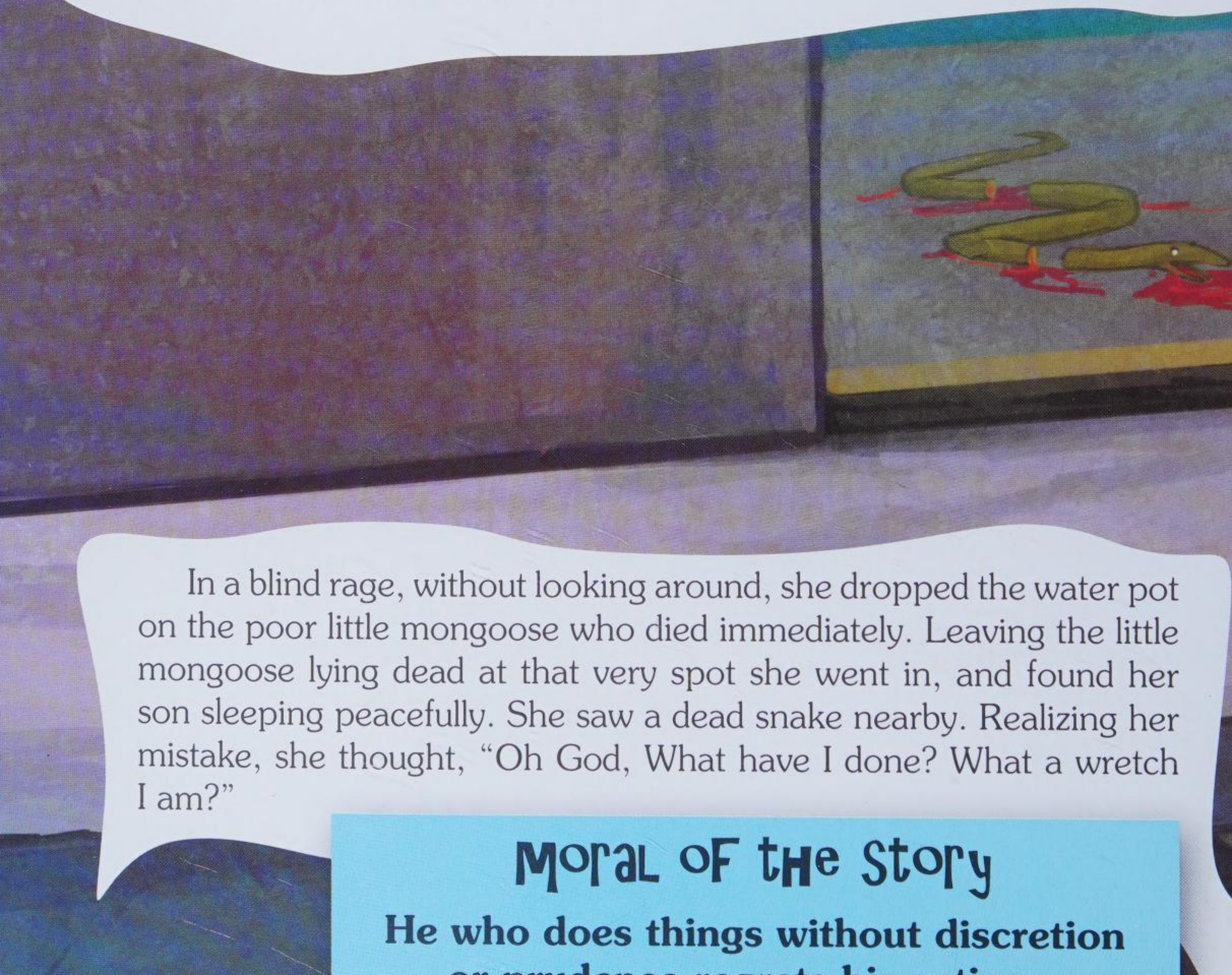
baby mongoose and started caring for it with equal love and care that she showed her son. Yet she never left her son alone because she did not trust the mongoose, fearing that it may harm her son.

One day, leaving for the lake to bring water, the *brahmini* told her husband, "My dear! I am going to fetch water, see to that the mongoose does not harm the child. Deva Sharma replied, "Don't worry my dear! He's sleeping on the cradle peacefully."

The *brahmini* said, "I know that. But I'm worried about the mongoose, that he may harm our son." As soon as she left, the *brahmin* also left the house to beg for alms, leaving the house opened. Just then, a black cobra crept into the house and moved slowly towards the sleeping baby.

The mongoose saw the cobra and fearing danger to the baby, he attacked him. He fought fiercely with the cobra and tore him to pieces, scattering the bits far and wide. He was happy that he had saved the baby. He thought when the *brahmini* enters the house, she would be happy to see that he had killed the cobra.

So, with blood trickling in his mouth, he went out to greet the *brahmini*. The *brahmini*, seeing the blood on the mongoose's mouth, was so shocked that she thought, "Oh God! What has he done to my son? He must have killed him..."



In a blind rage, without looking around, she dropped the water pot on the poor little mongoose who died immediately. Leaving the little mongoose lying dead at that very spot she went in, and found her son sleeping peacefully. She saw a dead snake nearby. Realizing her mistake, she thought, "Oh God, What have I done? What a wretch I am?"

Moral of the Story

He who does things without discretion or prudence regrets his actions.

64

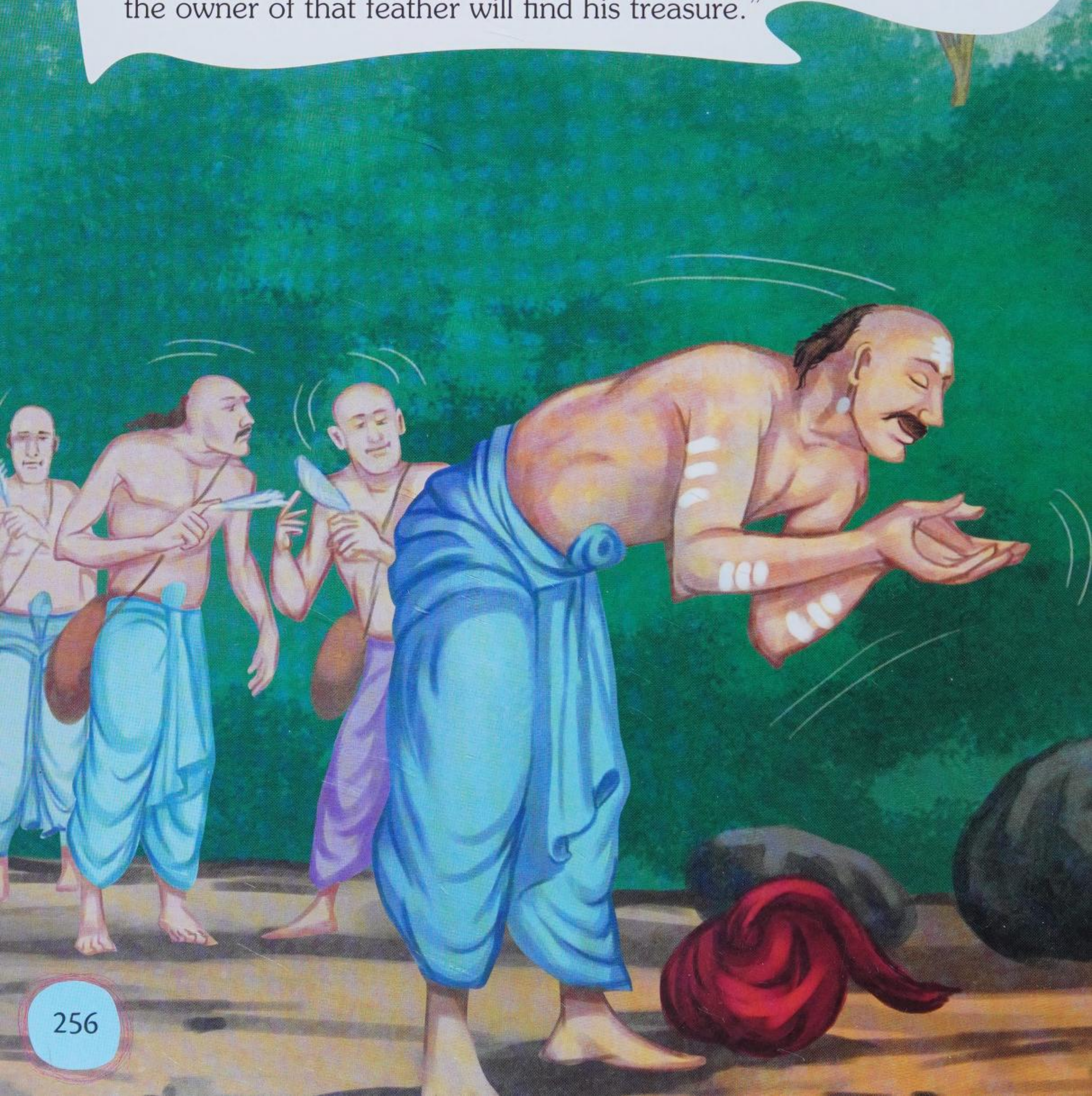
THE WHEEL-BEARER

Four poor *brahmins* lived in a village. They often talked among themselves, "Oh! What a terrible curse is this poverty. Wealth alone brings happiness. But, how can we get money?"

Then they decided to go to a far off place and earn money.

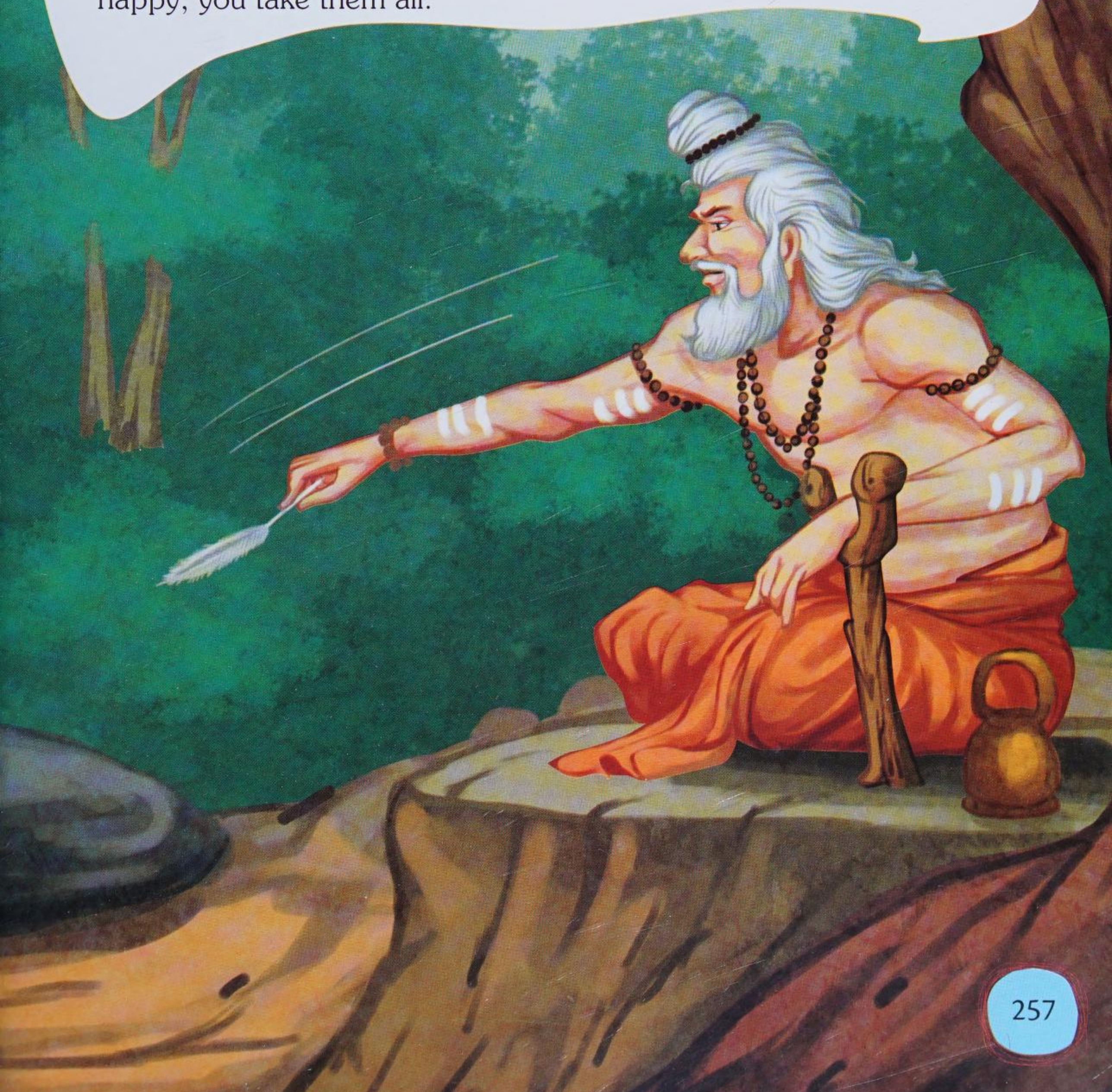
After several days of travel, they met a *sadhu*. They bowed to him and asked for his blessings.

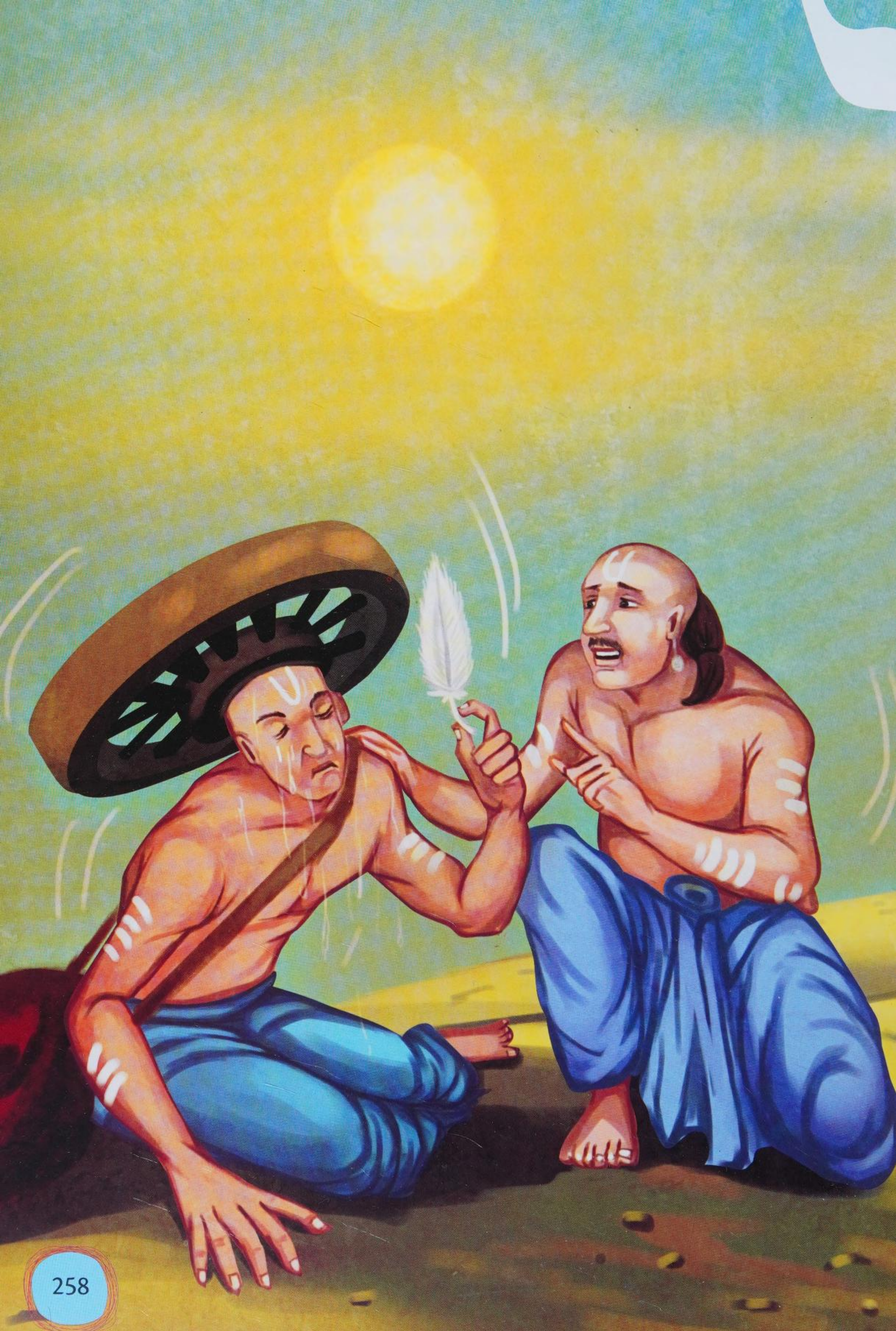
The *sadhu* gave them four feathers, one to each, and said, "Go to the north towards the Himalayas, and wherever your feather falls, the owner of that feather will find his treasure."



The four *brahmins* went towards the Himalayas, and the feather of the first *brahmin* dropped. On digging he found copper coins. He was overjoyed on seeing the copper. But the others said, "It's only copper, let's go ahead!" But the *brahmin* whose feather had dropped, said, "I am happy with these copper coins. You may all proceed." He stayed back, while the others resumed their journey.

After travelling some distance the second *brahmin's* feather dropped. On digging he found plenty of silver coins. Seeing it, he was delighted and told his friends, "Let us share these silver coins and live happily." But the other two refused saying, "No, if you are happy, you take them all."





The other two *brahmins* continued their journey again. After travelling some distance, the feather of the third *brahmin* fell down. On digging he found a large quantity of gold coins. He said to his companion, "Come on friend, let us share the gold and we can live happily." But the fourth *brahmin* refused saying, "My feather will get me diamonds?"

So, the last *brahmin* continued his journey for several days. Because of thirst, he searched for water. At last, he saw a man with a wheel rotating on his head. The *brahmin* went near him and asked, "Why do you have that wheel on your head? Can you tell me where I will get water?"

As soon as he spoke these words, the wheel left the other man's head and settled on his own. In dismay he asked the man, "What happened? When will this wheel leave my head?" The man said, "Only when someone like you comes with a feather in his hand and asks for water as you did."

The *brahmin* asked, "How long have you been bearing this hurt." The man replied, "I have no idea. But the God of wealth has cursed that the wheel-bearer shall live without food or water. That's how he punishes the one who dares to grab his wealth. Anyway, thank you for relieving my pain, and good bye!" So saying, he left the place.

Moral of the Story

Don't be greedy.

65

THE LION THAT SPRANG TO LIFE

Once four friends lived in a village. Three of them were very learned but lacked common sense. The fourth one named Subuddhi was not a scholar but had common sense. They thought that there was no use of their learning unless it brought them money to live happily. They decided to go out and seek the support of the king and learned men in the city.

One friend told Subuddhi, "My friend, you will be misfit in the company of scholars. You should not join us." The other friend said, "No, no, he's our friend. Let him also come with us."

So Subuddhi also joined them on their journey. When they were passing through a forest, they spotted the skeleton of a lion. One of them said, "Look here! Let us test our knowledge, by bringing this dead lion to life."

They discussed about how they could infuse life into the skeleton. One of them said, "I will assemble the bones into the proper form," while the other said, "I will put blood and flesh onto the skeleton." Then the third man said, "Then, I will breathe life into the body." Hearing this, Subuddhi warned them, "No friends, it's very risky. If the lion comes back to life, it'll kill us all."

The other three ignored him by saying, "Will you shut up? We will not listen to you, as you are a fool."

Subuddhi told them, "Well, alright then; but wait till I climb the tree nearby." He climbed up a nearby tree and watched his friends. The three scholars started their experiment and as expected the lion sprang to life. At once, it attacked the three scholars and killed them. Subuddhi, who sat on the top of the tree watching all these said, "Thank God! I am not a scholar!"

Moral of the Story

Wisdom is superior to knowledge.

66

THE LEARNED FOOLS

Once four friends, after acquiring the knowledge of the scriptures, were returning home. On their way, they reached an intersection of

two roads. They were undecided about the path when on one road they saw a funeral procession. At once, one of them opened his book and read out, "Follow the path taken by great men." So they

followed the procession to the cremation ground where they met a donkey.

Now the second man opened his book and read out, "He who comes to your aid in times of danger, famine, cremation and invasion is truly a friend." He told his friends that since the donkey has come to them during the cremation; it should be their best friend. At once, one of them held on to the neck of the donkey, while another washed its feet. After sometime they found a camel. The third man now opened his book and read out, "What moves fast is righteousness," and they decided that the camel must be the symbol of righteousness.

The fourth man referred to his book and found that righteousness and friendship should always be together. Accordingly, they tied the donkey and the camel together. Seeing this, the donkey's owner immediately rushed to the spot to beat them. But, they escaped and continued their journey.

On the way they found a leaf floating in a river.

One of them remembered a verse describing how a leaf helped a man to cross the river. He jumped on the leaf and was carried down by the current.

Seeing his friend in distress, the second man remembered a verse saying, "When total loss stares in the face, a wise man sacrifices half and manages with what remains." Thus, with a view to save 'half' of his friend, he cut off the head of the drowning man.

The three then resumed their journey. On the way three villagers invited them for a feast. When the host served a dish resembling noodles to one of them, he thought, "What is long should be discarded" and so, he left the place without eating.

The second man was served pancakes. He thought of the verse, "What spreads is not good for health" and thus refused to eat.

The third man was served with doughnuts. He remembered the verse, "There is peril where there is a hole" and hastily retreated without even touching his food. In this way, they went home without having food.

Moral of the Story

Being knowledgeable without wisdom ends in ruin.

67

THE WEAVER

A weaver named Mandaraka lived in a city. One day when he was weaving clothes, the wooden pegs of his weaving machine broke. So he went to the nearby forest to cut wood to make new wooden pegs. He stopped in front of a tree which he wanted to cut. As he lifted his axe to hit the first blow, he heard a voice saying, "Please stop! This tree is my home. Don't cut it down."

Hearing the voice, the weaver was surprised, but he said, "I need wood for my weaving machine, so I am cutting the tree. Who are you?" The voice said, "I'm the tree-spirit. This is my home. If you do not cut the tree, I will grant you any wish you ask for."

The weaver hesitantly said, "Well, if you say so, let me consult my wife and friend."

He then went to his friend and told him whatever had happened. His friend listened to him and said, "Go and ask for a kingdom. I shall then be your minister."

The weaver said, "Well, but let me consult my wife too."

But his friend said, "No, don't do that. She may not be able to decide on her own." He, however, refused to listen to his friend, and went straight to his wife and narrated the entire happening. His wife said, "You are a weaver using two hands. If you have two more hands and one more head, then you can earn double."

The weaver was happy with the advice given by his wife. Then he went to the tree-spirit and prayed, "O great spirit, I request you to give me two more hands and an extra head."

At once, he got two more hands and one more head. Happily, he walked home. But alas! As he neared the city with his new appearance, people gathered around him, amused as well as afraid of his four hands and two heads. They thought he was a monster and started beating him with stones and sticks, until he died.

Moral of the Story

Always listen to the advice of wise friends.

68 THE BRAHMIN'S DAYDREAM

Once a *brahmin* named Swabhavakripan lived in a city. He lived by getting alms. After using some of the grains which he got as alms, he stored the rest in a clay pot which he hung on a peg in the wall.

One day, after having enough food he found that he was still left with plenty of grains in the pot. Soon he dozed off and started dreaming, "Someday this pot will be completely filled with grains and if there would be famine, people will start dying. A rich man will find me with enough grains and will offer a high price for the grains I have. With that money, I will buy a pair of cows and sell their milk and earn money."

Soon I will buy more cows and then I will have a big herd. I will earn plenty of money. With that money I will buy buffaloes and later horses.

When the stable is full of horses I will sell them and buy lots of gold. Then a rich man will come to me and say, "Sir! Will you please marry my daughter? I will give one half of my wealth to you." The beautiful woman I marry, will bear my son. I will call him Chandrahasa. One day when he is old enough to crawl on all fours, he will come and disturb me at work. I will scold my wife and ask her to take my son away. But being busy with household work, she will ignore me. Whereupon I will give her a kick on her back."

While dreaming so, the poor *brahmin* kicked the pot of grains and the grains spilled all over the floor.

Moral of the Story

Don't build castles in the air.

69 THE MONKEY'S REVENGE

A king named Chandra ruled over a small state. His son was fond of playing with monkeys. So the king acquired a number of monkeys as his pet and looked after their needs.

A flock of sheep was also kept for his son's amusement. One of the sheep was fond of food and would daily sneak into the kitchen and eat whatever was in sight.

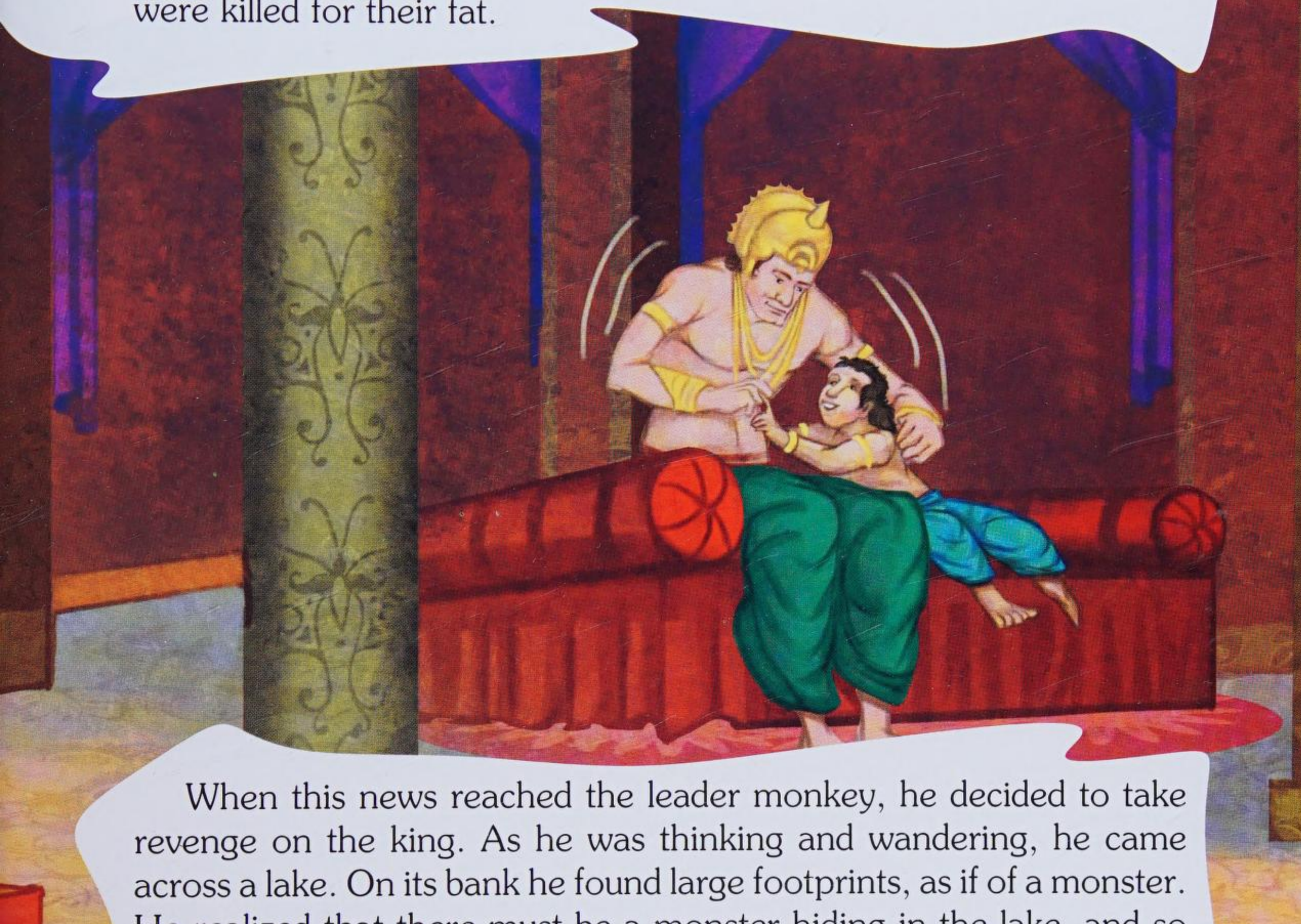
One day, the monkey leader saw this; he said to the other monkeys, "Well, this is not good. One day the cooks will find him in the kitchen and hit him with anything that comes into their hands, or even a burning log. The woolly back of this sheep may quite easily catch fire.

Then this sheep will start running wildly all over the palace. The thatched roof and the stable and even the horses will get burnt. Then the doctor will tell that a monkey's fat is the best medicine for burns. Then they will kill us all and that will be the end of monkeys.

Therefore, let us leave the palace and move to the forest."

The younger monkeys, however, refused to listen and said, "Sir, you have become old and senile. We are not going to leave this palace where we have the best food available. What will we get to eat in the jungles?"

Hearing this, the leader left the palace all alone. Soon his words came true. The sheep was hit with a burning log, and it ran all over the palace and then the stable. In order to cure the burn, the monkeys were killed for their fat.



When this news reached the leader monkey, he decided to take revenge on the king. As he was thinking and wandering, he came across a lake. On its bank he found large footprints, as if of a monster. He realized that there must be a monster hiding in the lake, and so he cleverly used a lotus stalk as a straw and drank water from the lake. While he was drinking, the monster appeared out of the lake and said, "Sir, I admire your wisdom. No one who enters the lake survives. I shall grant you a boon. Tell me, whatever you want."

The monkey said, "Tell me, how many persons can you eat."

The monster said, "Thousands! But they should all step into the water."

The monkey said, "I have an enmity with the king. If you lend me the necklace on your body, I will somehow persuade the king and his men to enter the lake for hidden wealth."

The monster gave him the pearl necklace. The monkey reached the kingdom of King Chandra wearing the necklace. People who saw the necklace wondered at its beauty and they started asking him how he got it. The monkey told them, "There's a lake in the forest. Whoever takes a dip in it is rewarded with a necklace."

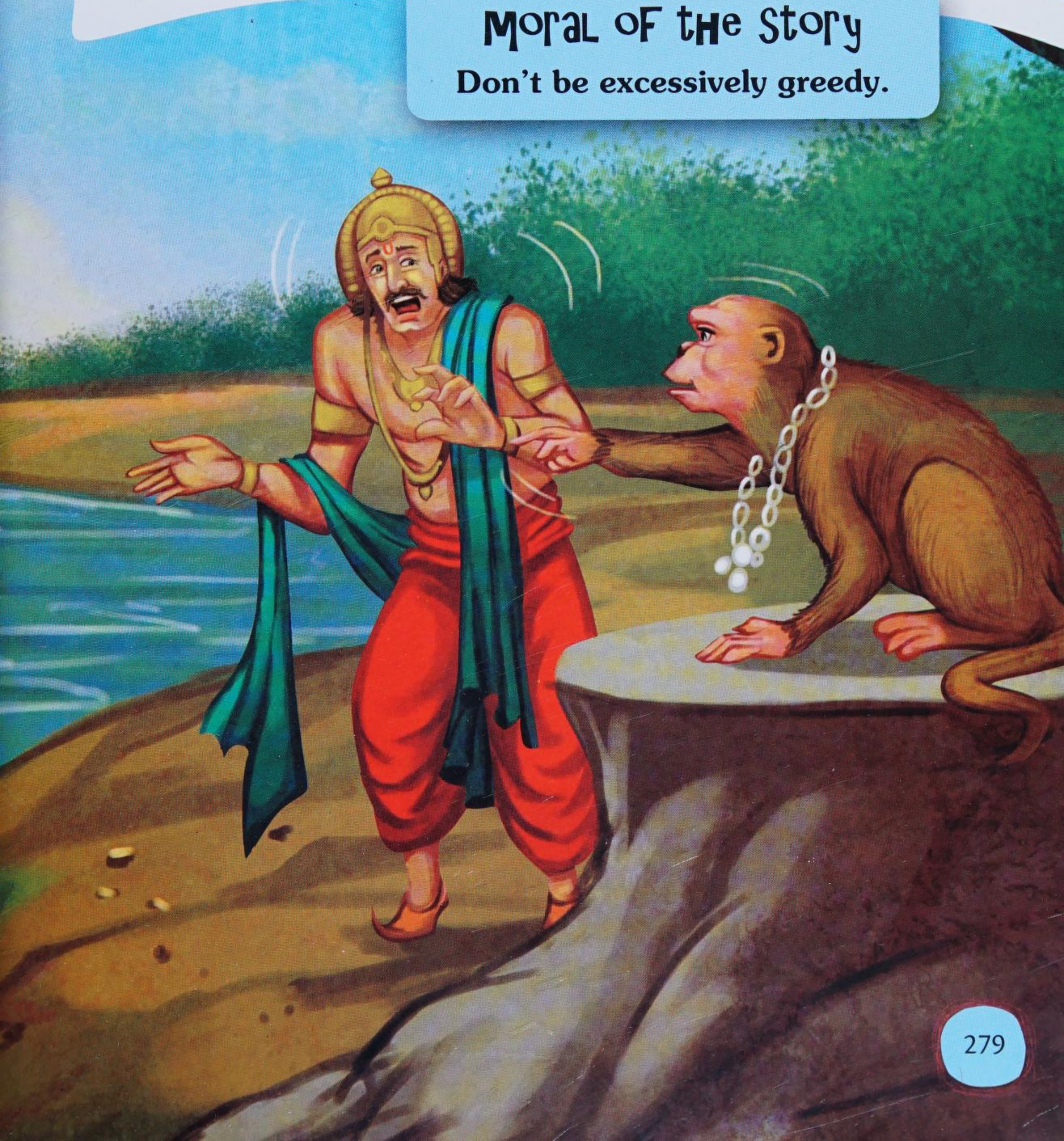
Soon the king also came to hear the story of the necklace. At once, he asked the monkey, "Is what I hear true?" The monkey replied, "Yes sir."

The king took all his followers and led them to the lake. No sooner did the followers jump into the lake, the monster ate them all. Seeing that his people were dying, the king asked the monkey, "Hey, Why do my followers die?"

The monkey replied, "Merciless king! You destroyed the lives of all my kinsfolk and now I have taken revenge on you for that! I spared your life to teach you a lesson."

Moral of the Story

Don't be excessively greedy.



70

THE MOTHER'S ADVISE

A *brahmin* boy named Brahmadatta lived in a city with his old mother. One day, when he was planning to travel to another village, his mother told him not to travel alone. The boy said, "Mother, don't be afraid about me. The village I am visiting is very safe. Just take care of yourself till I come back."

Knowing that he was determined to go, the mother went to the well in the backyard and took out a crab, gave it to her son and said, "Son, keep this crab with you. It'll help you when you're in danger."

He took the crab in a camphor box and set out on his journey. Being summer time, the day was very hot. He halted and took rest under a big tree.

From the hollow of the tree, a snake emerged and came near Brahmadatta to bite him. Just then, the snake was attracted to the fragrance of camphor, and thinking it to be an eatable tried to swallow the box containing the crab. Soon, the crab came out of the box and caught hold of the snake's head tightly, squeezing him to death. Then the boy woke up and found a dead snake lying nearby. He also saw the crab out of the box alive, and at once realized what had happened.

He then remembered the words of his mother and thought he did well by listening to her advice.

Moral of the Story

It is always good to have a companion.

71 THE THIEF AND THE HORSE

Once there was a king named Vijayasena who had a lovely daughter named Mauktika. Everyday during twilight, a fiend used to haunt her chamber, and try to carry her off. One day when she was spending time with her beloved, the fiend came. The princess's beloved saw the fiend and got terrified. Mauktika said, "It comes everyday at this hour and threatens me. Please do something to get rid of him."

Hearing this, the foolish fiend thought, "Oh, so there is another one like me who comes here every night and like me wishes to carry the princess away. But it looks as if he is also not able to carry her off. So, let me take the form of a horse and wait for him in the stable."

Then he took the form of a horse and stood amongst the other horses. At midnight, a thief entered the stable and looking at the fiend horse, he thought, "It is a fine horse. It will fetch me a good price in the market."

Then he sat on the horse and rode out. The fiend horse thought, "My God! The rider must be another friend of the princess. Maybe he is taking me to kill me."

Out of fear, the fiend horse started galloping at a terrifying speed. The thief thought that the horse must be a devil, as it was uncontrollable. So he wanted to get off the horse. On the way, the horse passed from under a tree and the thief clung to one of the branches of the tree saying, "Thank God, I am saved."

The fiend horse in turn thought, "I am free. Let me run away now."

This was watched by a monkey sitting on a nearby tree. He was actually fiend's friend. So he asked the fiend horse, "Why are you running away from the man? Why don't you eat him?"

Hearing this, the fiend horse took his natural form and returned to the place where the thief had stopped. The thief thought, "This monkey, why does he interfere like this? I will teach him a lesson." He caught the monkey's tail and hit him hard on the ground. Seeing this, the fiend thought, "Oh! How powerful he is? I must run away from him." And it ran away.

Moral of the Story

One must use his wit when there is danger around.

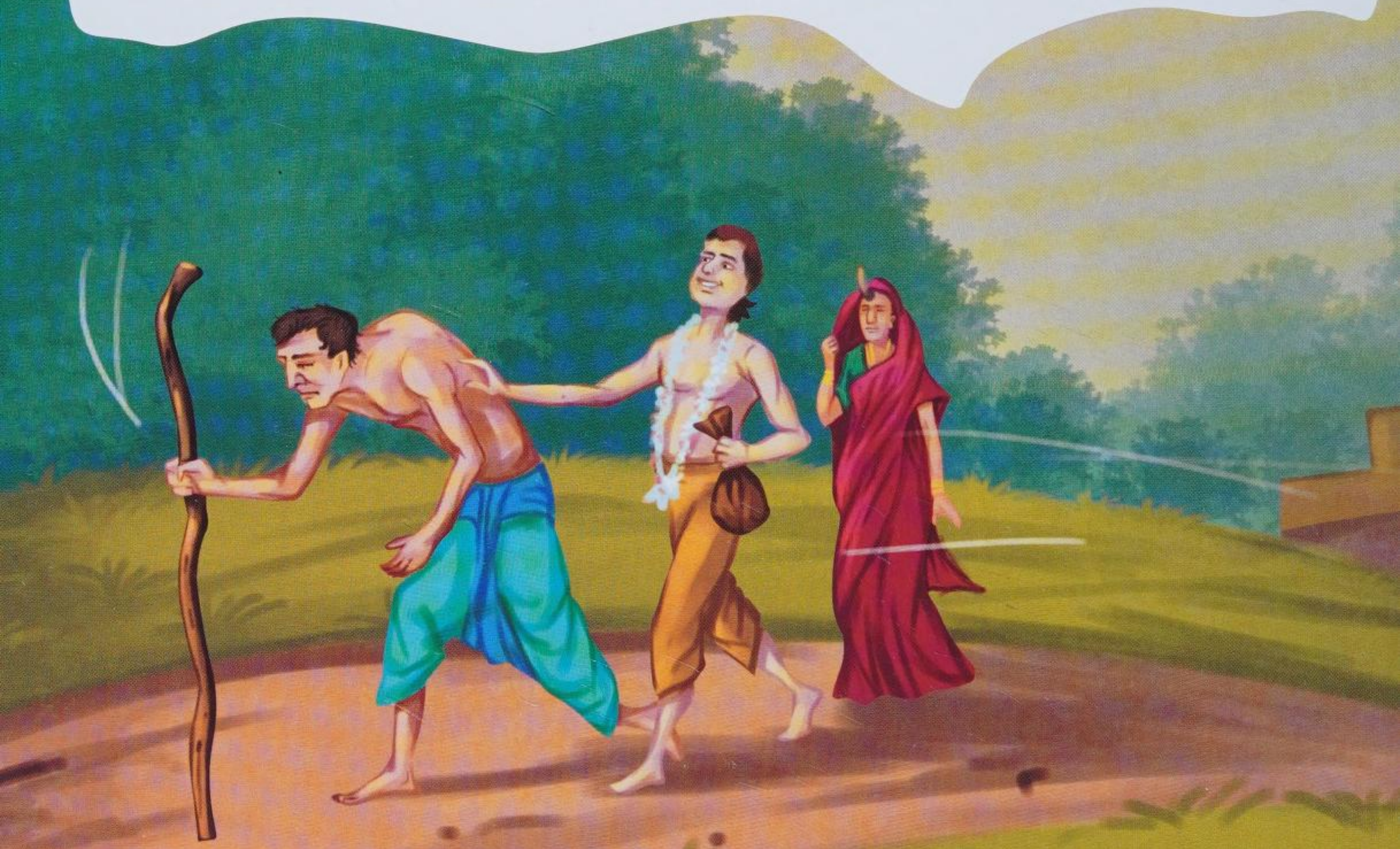
72

THE PRINCESS AND THE BLIND MAN

Once there lived a king named Madhusena. His daughter was born with a horn on her head. The king was horrified by this and so summoned the priest's to consult.

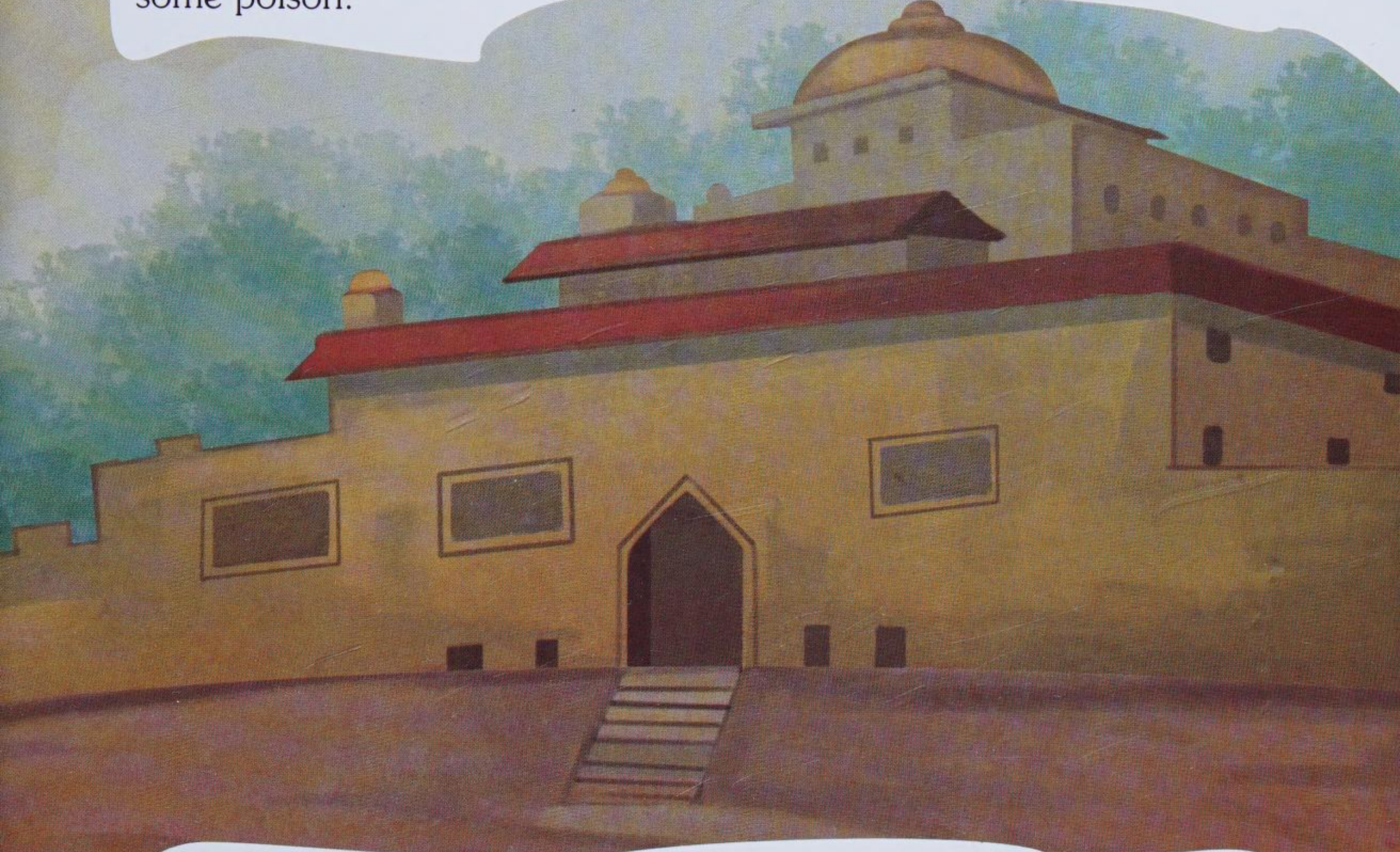
One priest said, "Sir, It will be a calamity to keep a baby with a horn in this kingdom." Another priest said, "Marry her off to someone and send the couple out of this country. Till the time you marry her off, you should avoid the very sight of this princess."

When the daughter grew up, the king announced that the one who marries his daughter will be given one hundred thousand gold coins. And after marriage, they have to leave the country.



Several days passed, but no one came to marry the princess. One day, two friends – a blind man and a hunchbacked man came to know about the king's announcement. They decided that one of them will marry the princess. The blind man said, "I will marry the princess and live happily with the gold we get."

The blind man then went to the king and said, "O great majesty, I am ready to marry the princess." And so, the blind man and the princess got married. They were sent to a distant land. The hunchbacked man also went along with them. Three of them lived comfortably in the new place. Soon, the princess started liking the hunch-backed man. And one day she whispered to him, "My beloved, If we both get rid of this blind man, we can get married. I have a plan." Try and find some poison.



After a few days, the hunch-backed friend brought a black snake and told the princess, "Beloved, this snake's venom is very poisonous. Cook this snake with lots of spice, and feed your husband, who after eating it will die, for sure!" So saying, he left the place.

She started cooking the black snake, and when her husband came, she told him, "Dear, please stir this now and again, till I bring water from the well."

When the blind man started stirring, the poisonous vapours rising from the pot got into his eyes. He felt strange, and by a miracle, he could now see everything around. Then he looked into the pot and

found that it was not a fish, but a deadly snake being cooked. He realized that someone had planned to kill him.

The hunch-backed man and the princess now returned, and found the blind man stirring the pot. The hunchbacked man asked the princess, "Have you cooked the fish for your husband?" She replied, "It is cooking."

Hearing their voices, the blind man rushed to them and looked his friend and said, "You cheat! So, this is how you wanted to get rid of me."

Saying this, he took a heavy stick and hit the hunch-backed man on his back, his hunch disappeared. Then he hit the princess on her head with the stick, her horn too disappeared.

Moral of the Story

It is fate that decides one's fortune.

73

THE BRAHMIN AND THE DEVIL

Once upon a time when a *brahmin* was travelling through a forest, a devil saw him from the top of a tree. It thought, "Hmmm, this fellow could be of use to me."

When the *brahmin* came near the tree, the devil jumped on his shoulders. Terrified, the *brahmin* cried out, "Hey, you! What are you doing? Who are you?"

The devil said, "Ha!-ha!-ha! I am the king of devils. Now walk on. Don't ask questions."

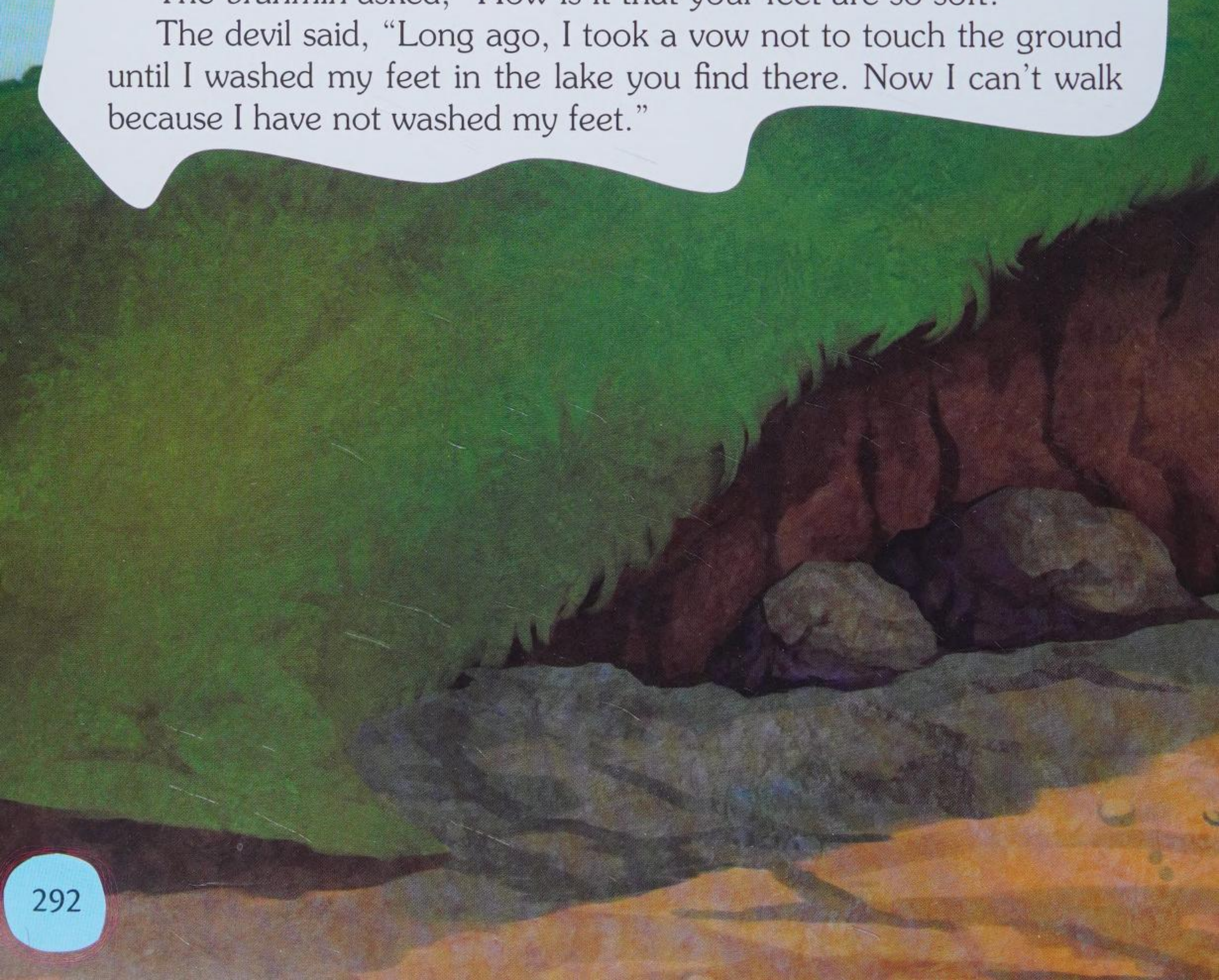
The *brahmin* thought that it was his last day and walked on.

After sometime, the *brahmin* felt the feet of the devil and thought, "How soft are the devil's feet, like butter." Then he asked the devil, "Can I ask you a question?"

The devil said, "Go ahead. You may ask."

The *brahmin* asked, "How is it that your feet are so soft?"

The devil said, "Long ago, I took a vow not to touch the ground until I washed my feet in the lake you find there. Now I can't walk because I have not washed my feet."



The *brahmin* then asked, "In that case, do you want me to take you there?" When the devil said yes, the *brahmin* started walking towards the lake, thinking of an idea to get rid of the devil.

The devil asked him to carry it to the very edge of the lake. Then it said, "Now, stand and wait here for a while. Let me wash my feet and offer my prayers to God." Then the devil thought, "Poor fellow! He does not know that he will be killed after my bath."

The *brahmin* too thought, "I am sure he will kill me when he returns."

As soon as the devil jumped into the lake to wash its feet, the *brahmin* ran away as fast as he could. He was sure that the devil would not follow him as it was afraid of violating his own vow.

Moral of the Story

When there's danger around, act promptly to save yourself.

74

THE TRADERS AND THE NOBLE THIEF

Once there lived a *brahmin* in a big city, who became a thief due to misdeeds of his previous birth. One day, he came across four traders who were selling goods. Being a thief, he thought that he should steal their money by gaining their confidence.

He went to them and said, "Friends, I am a very poor man. I would like to know if I could serve you all in any manner. I promise that I will be very faithful to you all."

Believing his words, the four traders agreed to keep him as their servant. The traders sold all their possessions and with that money they bought expensive jewels. While returning home, they thought of a plan to keep their jewels safe. They cut their thighs open and hid their jewels inside the cut, and then sewed the thighs back. The thief watched this and was disappointed that the traders did not give him even a small amount of their wealth. So he decided to kill the traders and take away their wealth.

When the traders got ready to move on, he told them with tears in his eyes, "Friends, I cannot live without you. Please let me come with you and I will serve you all till my end." They agreed.

After a long journey they reached a village occupied by robbers. Suddenly, they heard a crow shouting loudly, "Look, the visitors here are very rich. Come on. Kill them and take away their wealth."

The robbers heard the shout of the crow and started attacking the traders with sticks. But when they searched them, they found nothing. They were surprised that the crow had fooled them for the first time. They told the traders, "This crow always tells the truth. We know that you certainly have money with you hidden somewhere. Take it out, or we will kill you."

At this point, the thief thought, "If I tell them the truth about the hidden jewels, they will kill all of us." So, he decided to save his friends. He told the robbers, "None of us have any hidden money.

You can even search our bodies. You can cut me open to see that we are speaking the truth." The robbers did as he told them. They cut open his body and found nothing inside. They believed him and let the four traders go free.

Moral of the Story

Shrewd people save the lives of others.

75

THE FOOLISH DONKEY AND THE WISE JACKAL

Once there was a donkey named Garvi who lived in a village. In the daytime he carried clothes and other loads for his master. At night he

used to enter the farms outside the village and return home at dawn due to the fear of farm owners. One night, when he was roaming around in the fields, he met a jackal. He made friends with him. From then on, they met every night, and went together to the nearby farms to feed on fruits and vegetables. At dawn, they would go home. One night, when they were roaming in a happy mood, the donkey told the jackal, "My friend, look at that orchard! It is full of delicious fruit! Come, let us go there and feast on them."

The jackal agreed on the condition that the donkey will keep quiet. The two entered the orchard and ate the fruits to their heart's content. The donkey said, "How wonderfully happy I am! A great meal in this moonlit night! See how bright the night is, so clear, I feel like singing. Now tell me which raga shall I sing?"

The jackal said, "Dear friend, why do you wish to stir up trouble? Since we are engaged in the business of thievery, thieves and lovers should go quietly about their business."

The donkey said, "Oh, that's not an issue. I myself can sing

a song for you."

Before the jackal could stop him, the donkey started singing in a loud voice, forgetting his surroundings. And lo...! One of the watchmen of the farm woke up and rushed towards the donkey, and started beating him heavily till he dropped to the ground. The jackal, who had hid himself hearing the watchman's footsteps, ran away towards the forest.

Moral of the Story

He who has no wits of his own, perishes.

The *Panchatantra* is an ancient Indian collection of interrelated animal fables, originally written in verse and prose, arranged within a frame story. It is divided into five parts where each part contains a main story, called the frame story, which in turn contains several stories "emboxed" in it, as one character narrates a story to another. The five parts are -

Separation of Friends

This is the longest of five parts and illustrates the incidents that frequently lead to separation of friends. It contains around thirty stories, mostly told by two jackals.

Gaining of Friends

The second part illustrates how lost friends can be gained back or new friends be made. This part depicts the essence of unity and friendship.

Of Crows and Owls

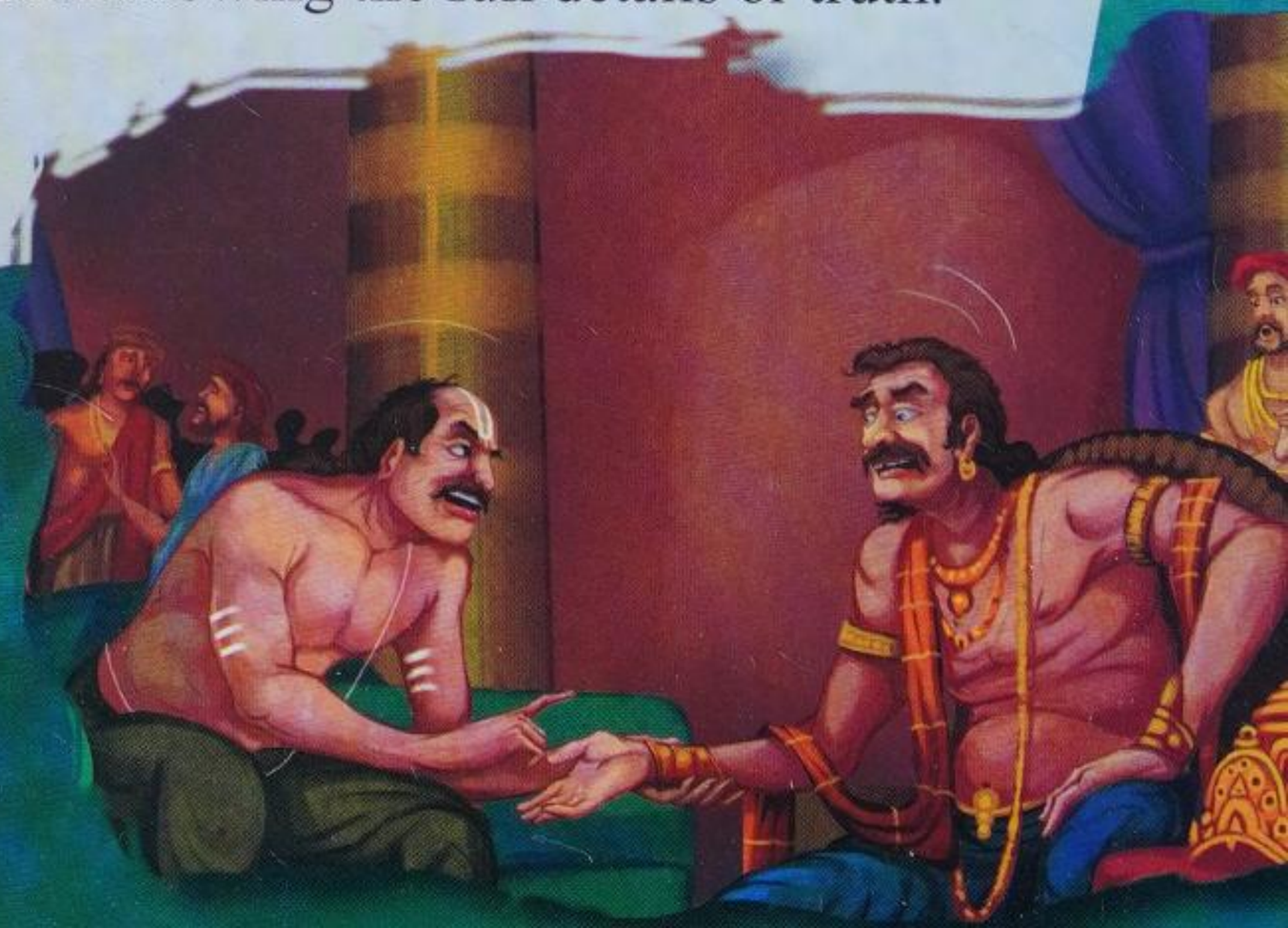
This part teaches how misunderstanding between people can be created using deceit and duplicity, which weakens their unity.

Loss of Gains

The fourth part gives an insight into how gains made earlier can be lost if proper care is not taken or the consequences are not analyzed.

Rash Deeds

This part teaches about the consequences of taking action in haste without knowing the full details or truth.



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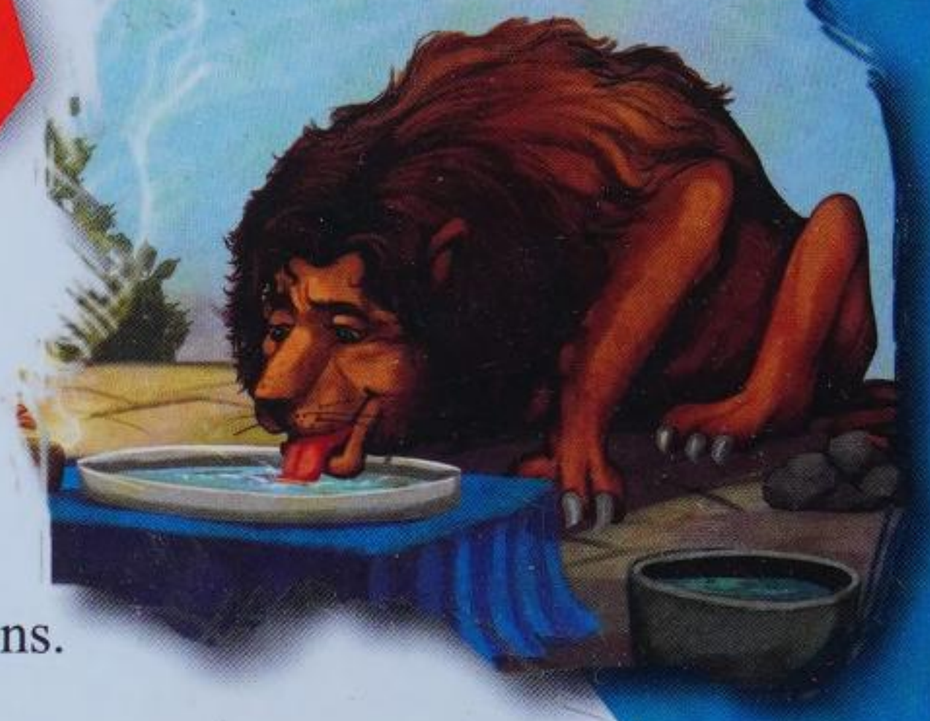
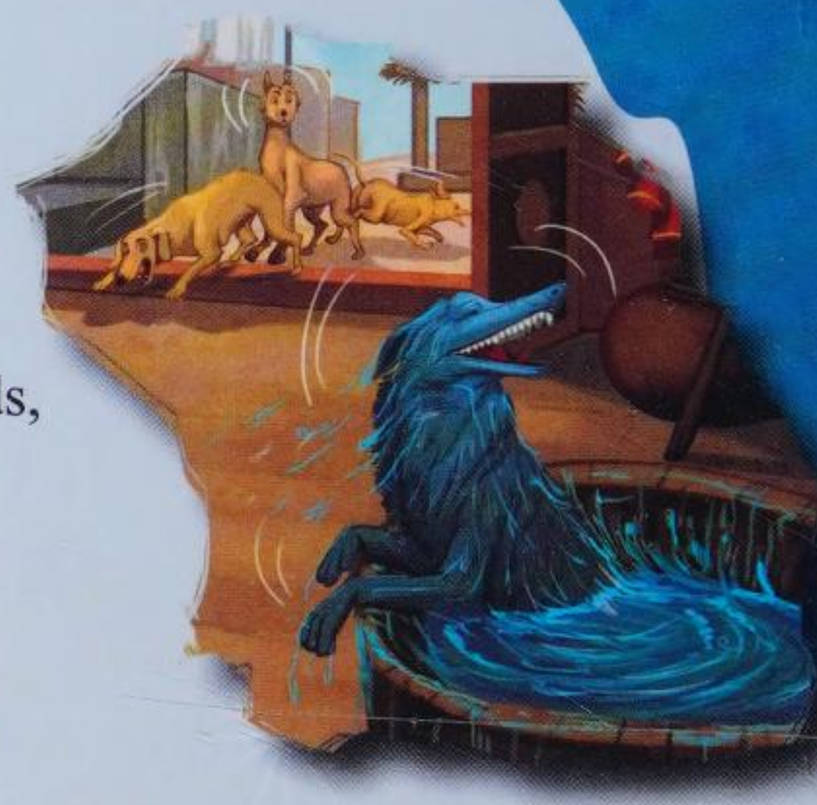
Vishnu Sharma's

Complete Illustrated PANCHATANTRA



The *Panchatantra stories* are very old.
Originally narrated in Sanskrit (Hindu) and
Pali (Buddhist), they were written in their
present form by Pandit Vishnu Sharma.

Legend has it that King Amar Shakti asked
Pandit Sharma to impart worldly wisdom to his three sons.
Pandit Sharma agreed to do this within 6 months.
He narrated stories with subtle messages to the princes that
taught them various qualities for success and survival
such as unity, friendship, firmness of mind, earnestness etc.



These stories of *Panchatantra* are divided into five parts.
'Pancha' means five and *'tantra'* refers to codes of conduct.
The five *tantras* are Separation of Friends, Gaining of Friends,
Of Crows and Owls, Loss of Gains and Rash Deeds.

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